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THE LONELY CHRISTMAS

"I hate Christmas!" You said with a sob,
And wept for your heart was sore;
For now instead of a holly wreath
You see black crepe at your door.

And hovering over the Christmas tree
Are the wraiths of vanished faces;
The house is still with an eerie chill,
As you count those vacant places.

The candle burns in its customary place, —
There is smudge in its fitful flare;
In vain you listen the livelong day
For those well-known steps on the stair.

Then memory weaves a wistful tale
Of Christmas days of yore, —
Of the glorious laughter of mother and dad,
And the bright-eyed doll on the floor;

When Santa came in all covered with snow,
And the sleigh-bells jingled in glee;
But now there is silence, as ghosts of the past
Look out from the Christmas tree.

And yet — at midnight the purple skies
Are flooded with heavenly light,
And the angels still sing of the new-born King,
As they sing each Christmas night.

From high in heaven your loved ones look down,
And guard you with tenderest care;
Praying the Christ-child to watch o'er your ways,
And guide you to meet them there.

So say "Merry Christmas" to mother and dad,
As you dry those tears from your eyes;
And hark — "Merry Christmas!" comes lovingly back
From your true home in the skies.

For ever and ever for those on earth,
And those who sleep neath the sod,
The only true peace and joy we can know
Must come from the Will of God!

Then kneel at the crib, and smile at the Babe,
Who for love of you was born;
And may there be peace and joy in your heart
This Merry Christmas morn!

— A. F. Browne.

FATHER TIM CASEY

used 12/25-
1960

CHRISTMAS ON THE PACIFIC

C. D. McENNERY

CHRISTMAS EVE in mid-Pacific. Father Casey could read in the faces of his fellow-travelers that he himself was not alone in feeling little stirrings of homesickness tugging at his heart-strings. The captain had done what he could: the good boat was decked out like a flower garden — the band was executing its choicest selections — the chef and the cellarer at their best — wining, dining and dancing in full swing — but it still remained Christmas-Eve-far-from-home.

The priest extricated himself from the noisy crowd to take a few turns on the quiet upper deck, where the soft, enervating breeze was a trifle fresher, and to dream of the crunching snow and the frost-sharpened air of childhood's Christmases. With measured, unhurried tread a silent figure approached. "Ah," said Father Casey to himself, "our Japanese friend, Mr. Matoyo, has pumped the other dry; it is my turn now."

"Good evening, Reverend. May I join you?"

The correctness of his speech showed that he had studied his English with Japanese industry and thoroughness; the strong foreign accent would be modified with exercise. He addressed the priest as "Reverend" because the ship's officers and most of the passengers did so, hence he concluded that was the proper form.

"Everybody is gay tonight," he said. "But in the West Christmas is also a religious feast, is it not?"

Father Casey winced at that "also." He had to admit to himself however that a pagan, judging from what he could see, was bound to conclude that the religious element (if any) in the celebration of Christmas was very secondary indeed. "Christmas," he replied, "is, or at least should be, *principally* a religious feast. In fact in the beginning it was exclusively a religious feast."

"It has been changed?"

"The feast has not been changed, but the religious spirit of many who celebrate it has been changed. As I said, in the beginning it was exclusively a religious feast, but the religious event it commemorated was of such transcendent beauty and beneficence that it filled every

Christian heart with joy. This joy they shared with one another in happy reunions of families and friends, in feasting and gift-giving. Little by little the religious spirit grew cold and these manifestations of Christmas joy began to obscure the sublime event that was their cause."

"And what, Reverend, was this so important event?"

"Have you no idea at all of the meaning of Christmas?" the priest inquired.

"None whatever. These decorations of the boat, I am told, have reference to the Christmas feast. I have been examining them, and I find them quite confusing. I see camels crossing a burning desert, reindeer drawing a sleigh through deep snow over the house tops, shooting stars, sheep on a mountain, winged spirits, young men and women embracing each other as they skate on the ice, a little peasant family in a stable with the animals. It seems impossible that such diverse manifestations should commemorate one and the same event."

FATHER CASEY realized that he was speaking with a man who knew nothing of Christianity but who, in his eagerness for information of all kinds, was ready to lend a willing ear to an exposition of its tenets in the same spirit as to an explanation of baseball, labor-unionism or any of the other peculiar movements of the West. "If," said the priest to himself, "he listens to all the different descriptions of Christianity he can get on this boat, he will be more confused about Christianity than he already is about Christmas. Well, I have first turn. I shall give him the true doctrine about the fundamental principles of Christianity before the rest of the passengers begin regaling him with their own pet heresies." Then he said aloud: "Christmas is the birthday of Jesus Christ."

"One of your great men, no doubt. General? Statesman? Financier?"

"He was a carpenter."

Mr. Matoyo felt pity for the low condition of the great man of the Christians.

Father Casey continued inexorably: "He is the baby you see in that stable with the ox and the ass."

"But He later won glory before his people by his achievements?" the Japanese suggested, in his haste to get away from this degrading spectacle.

"Glory before His people! On the contrary, His people had Him executed along with two bandits. It was not their custom to hang criminals but to nail them to a cross, to crucify them. That is why, in Christian churches you will see the image of Jesus Christ dying on a cross."

Mr. Matoyo gave up. These Christians were hopeless. They made no attempt to save face. Indeed they recounted these shameful details about their great man as though they were proud of them.

"He submitted," Father Casey continued, "to this bitter death (being all-powerful, He could have prevented it if He wished) in order to make amends for our wicked deeds, to lift us up to be sons of God, princes of heaven, inheritors of eternal, celestial glory. To accomplish this work of love He was born into our poor world. That is why we are so joyful at His birth. For thousands of years His people had been longing and praying and looking forward to this happy day."

"But — this — this peasant, this carpenter, was — was hanged, was crucified — and that made you princes of heaven? I do not understand."

"Naturally you would not — without understanding who Jesus Christ really is."

"Who is He?"

"He is the God-Man, He is both God and Man. As Man, He can represent His fellowmen — die, as their representative, to make amends for their evil deeds. As God, His amends are of infinite value, sufficient, and more than sufficient, to atone for their sins and to merit for them the privilege of sharing in His divinity, of being princes of heaven, sons of God."

"**T**HEN this Jesus Christ is one of your earth-gods. You Christians have earth-gods and heaven-gods, is it not?"

"Mr. Matoyo, there is but one God, Creator and Ruler of heaven and earth and all things."

"But *He* did not die on a scaffold, on a cross!"

"He loved us. He loved me — and you and all men with such exceeding great love that He died on a cross to save us from the punishment we deserve for our sins and to merit for us the eternal glory of heaven."

"But such a God," the Japanese objected, "could not die. The Creator and Ruler of heaven and earth could not die."

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"As God, He could not die. But He took a human body and soul like ours that He might be able to die on the cross to save us. Then, by His power as God, He rose from the dead, that we too might one day experience a glorious resurrection."

"He is half God and half Man?"

"He is wholly God and wholly Man. He has perfect divine nature and perfect human nature. Both natures are united in the one person of Jesus Christ."

"But how can that be?" Mr. Matoyo asked.

"God existed always. He exists of Himself and depends on nothing outside Himself. He is the Cause of everything else; therefore He must have existed always, for there was nothing else to cause Him to begin to exist. If He had not existed always, He would never have begun to exist, and therefore nothing would exist. He was always God; but in the beginning He was only God. Then at a certain pre-determined time He joined to Himself a human nature, a human body and soul and was born of a virgin in a stable in Bethlehem on Christmas night. Thenceforth He was both God and Man."

"I see. You Christians have reason to be very happy on Christmas since your God-Man was born for you on that day. But" — the Oriental could not get away from the disturbing thought that the God of the Christians lost face by His humble origin — "it is to be regretted that He happened to be born in a stable."

"Listen, Mr. Matoyo, since God is all-powerful, since He rules and governs all things, He could have arranged to be born in a palace had He wished, could He not?"

"Well — yes — if He is all-powerful."

"The great God was born in a stable because He wanted to."

"But why?"

"To cure our sick souls. Our soul sickness is undue hankering after wealth, after honors, after self-indulgence. This is stupid because wealth and honors and self-indulgence cannot make us happy. Furthermore it is harmful because it makes us lie and cheat and calumniate and fight and steal and degrade ourselves and others in our inordinate quest for wealth and honors and self-indulgence. God had often taught us through the common sense He gave us and through the teaching of the wise men He sent us to avoid this stupid and harmful quest. We would not listen. Therefore He came Himself to teach us this lesson

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by His own example. When we see our God deliberately choosing to be born in such poverty, we admit that money cannot be so important; when we see Him so despised and forgotten, we realize that honors are of little value; when we see Him in suffering from the first instant of His earthly life, we know that self-indulgence is neither noble nor beneficial."

"An efficient way of teaching a difficult lesson," the Japanese admitted.

"**T**HE Man-God lying there in the manger teaches us another lesson more important still."

"What is that?"

"The lesson of love. Born amid such sufferings and humiliations, He shows us how much He loves us. If we saw Him in a luxurious room surrounded by princes and courtiers, we might not have realized how much He loved us, but seeing Him born for our sake in an ox's stall, we cannot doubt it. Many would have feared to approach Him had He dwelt in the midst of royal splendor.

"The God of the West is good."

"The God of the West is also the God of the East. He is your God as well as mine, even though you do not know Him. He rules and conserves us both. As God, He sees all things past, present and future. Lying there in the straw of Bethlehem on the first Christmas night he sees and loves every man, woman and child of Japan as well as of Europe and America. He is inviting them all to cease wearing themselves out in the bootless quest for wealth, honors and self-indulgence, but to come and find true happiness in loving their God and enjoying His love. When He was born among His chosen people, the Jews, they rejected Him. 'He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.' And so He rejected them and brought His treasures and blessings to the gentiles. If Europe and America continue to ignore Him and to debase His birthday into an orgy of sinful gratification, He may leave them and seek refuge among the Orientals. One thing is certain: He will not be content until midnight Christmas bells ring out in every Japanese village and the crib of Bethlehem is reproduced in every Japanese home."

"I thank you for your explanation of Christmas." Repeating his ceremonious bow and flashing his inscrutable smile the Oriental withdrew and left Father Casey alone under the Christmas stars of the mid-Pacific.

Three Minute Instruction

WHAT CHRISTMAS TEACHES

The purpose of Advent is to give all of us time to think out the virtues especially taught by Christ through the circumstances of His birth, so that we may celebrate Christmas by bringing to Him the virtues He brings to us in the stable. It is hard to think at all about the events of Christmas without becoming impressed with powerful incentives to three great virtues:

1. The first is the virtue of *humility*. Humility fundamentally means the remembrance of our utter dependence on God and of the deserts of our sins, and therefore inspires the putting aside of all spurious claims to honor, attention, consideration and praise. Was there ever an example of humility like that of Christ in the stable? He had a right, as God, to honor and praise, but in becoming one of us, He had to give up that right and appear as helpless as we must remember we are in the eyes of God. Therefore, the stable, bleak and cold, the animals, mute and unthinking companions, the lack of all pomp and convenience—all cry out to us: Remember, thou too must be content with little, unconcerned about honor, humbly submissive to all that God wills!

2. The second is the virtue of *detachment*. Detachment means a happy-go-lucky freedom from worry about the material circumstances of our lives. It means really believing that if we have God in our hearts, it does not really matter whether we have fine raiment or patched garments, expensive food or left-overs and remnants, money in the bank or barely enough to live on. Was ever detachment more perfect than Christ's? He could have chosen the best, but He chose the worst of all possible material things, to prove that we too should not be anxious about what we possess and what we are lacking in our lives.

3. The third is the virtue of *charity* expressing itself in *zeal*. Zeal means a constant and burning desire to make others happy and to save their souls. At the crib we learn that true charity and zeal begin with stripping oneself of all that might be held dear. He Who came to save all, came with nothing He could call His own; those who have true zeal begin by emptying all self-love out of their souls. Too many would make others happy and save their souls, if only they could do so and yet lose nothing of their own. Saving others means losing oneself with Christ in love for others.

Bring these three virtues to Christ this Christmas. Bring Him humility by learning to say: Jesus, meek and humble of heart, make my heart like unto thine! Bring Him detachment by repeating over and over; O Lord, I shall be content with little so long as I have Thy love! Bring Him zeal by saying over and over: Nothing for myself, O Lord; all for Thee and for souls!

ON CHRISTMAS AND HYPOCRITES

It is right and good and necessary to be reminded that Christmas is not just holly and carols and shopping sprees. It is good to know who has a right to celebrate Christmas.

E. F. MILLER

THERE is one thing to be said for the Russian Communists — they are logical. They do not believe in Christianity, and so they do not celebrate Christmas. Perhaps Americans are not logical; perhaps they are just simple and innocent like overgrown children. But the fact is clear that most of them do not believe in Christianity; and yet all of them celebrate Christmas.

Take the one example of the huge department stores. Santa Claus stands at every counter dispensing good cheer and happy wishes to all and sundry who pass by. Merry Yuletide tunes like "Silent Night" and "Noel" come softly out of loud speakers so that the shoppers can buy their presents in the very atmosphere of the Christmas spirit. And the show windows! What glorious creations are they not! In one there is a forest of fir-trees glittering with tinsel and shining with silver bells. In another there are a crib and an Infant and a Virgin Mary. Joseph and the shepherds are standing by, life-like in appearance and posture. One would be almost forced to believe on beholding so beautiful a scene that here dwells Christ and here reigns His spirit.

It may be that Christ and His spirit are present within the revolving doors of the sprawling department stores. But some people hold that neither the One nor the other is there. If they are, Christ is hidden behind the mountains of decorations and His spirit is stifled by the fetid air that has its origin in executive hearts and comes streaming out into the store at large to taint not only the goods wrapped so daintily and sold at a good profit, but especially to poison the poor unfortunates who stand behind the counters and sell the goods at so little profit to themselves.

In other words what has that store to do with Christ and Christmas that employs girls to arrange the decorations, to wait on the customers, to stand wearily on their feet from morning until night with hardly a single opportunity to sit down and rest, to help in the work of making Christmas jolly for the buyer and profitable for the owner — and then recompenses them so miserably? What has that store to do with Christ

and Christmas that pays its employees no more than fourteen or fifteen dollars a week?

CHRIST did not come on Christmas day in order to give department store owners a chance to set up beautiful cribs and play pretty carols over loud speakers. He came especially for working girls, because working girls, like queens and kings, are made to His own image and likeness, and so valuable that they are worthy of the shedding of His blood. He thought that if He started His life by being born in a stable with nobody around Him but a handful of faithful friends to do Him honor, His poverty would give department store owners the idea of how precious and important working girls really were and of how much He loved every one of them. For His poverty and His loneliness were being accepted for their sake as they were being accepted for the sake of all mankind. Christ thought that department store executives, seeing this, would surely acquire the true Christmas spirit.

But Our Lord, speaking humanly of course, did not reckon with modern department store executives. (He will reckon with them later.) *Their* interest in working girls is often no more than a mathematical interest, i.e., concerned only with how much service these girls can render before they will fall over in a faint, how many sales they can turn in over as long a period of working hours as they may be allowed to put in without arousing public indignation, and how little they can be paid for services rendered without bringing the Unions down upon their collective and well-fed necks.

In other words the Infant Saviour, so poor and cold and tiny, did not do enough to make Christians out of these twentieth century respectables, these promoters of the opera and leaders in civic charity, these dictators of the sales world. He might even have wondered then, and be wondering now why they celebrate Christmas. We can hear Him say plaintively, "Say there, you shouldn't be putting up cribs and things. You're not one of mine. You don't want Me. At least you don't want all of Me. The proof is in the way you treat my little sisters who work behind your beautifully decorated counters. You're not any better in my eyes than they are; yet you give yourselves fifty times as much money, which incidentally is mine too, as you give them. Come now. You'd better stop all that decorating and hymn-playing. People will begin to think that you are hypocrites."

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Poor little Infant Jesus! It would be just like Him to talk in that way. He was so kind and so charitable. It would be just like Him to blame the strange conduct of pagan department store keepers at Christmas time on their lack of logic. Assuredly it would be the most generous interpretation that could be put on their conduct. Assuredly it would be far more kindly than to say that they went to all the trouble of recreating Bethlehem merely because they saw in that a fancy and undetectable method of bulging out their pockets a little more and raising their bank account a little higher. Still, for us who are striving for the perfection of divine charity and haven't quite attained to it as yet, it is difficult to forget the working girl's angle. Christ made Christmas to show the world what it means to give. And working girls are given so little.

Let it be said in all honesty, though, that not all heads of department stores come under censure and condemnation. There are some to whom a crib means more than a \$ sign. There are some who are being Christlike not only at Christmas time but especially at Christmas time. They understand the meaning of the words, "Peace on earth, good will to men." To them may there be all honor and praise.

THEN there are the city fathers. These go about, a week or so before the great feast, and hang the streets with most stunning decorations. Wreaths on every post, streamers across every important thoroughfare, shining Christmas trees on every corner. It would appear from appearances that some great personage were expected, and that everything had to be fittingly adorned in order to fete him properly. Well, yes. That was the original idea in the adorning of a city at Christmastide. Towns and villages were given a festive air during the Middle Ages because the people were expecting Christ to come and visit them in the person of His spirit. He was born in a cave once; by George, He wouldn't be born in a cave a second time. He was refused the shelter of the inn and abandoned by all His creatures once; please God, that wouldn't happen again. They'd meet Him, and dressed in their Sunday clothes too, and they'd sing to Him, and make Him walk beneath the swinging greens of a veritable forest of flowers and holly and freshly cut trees so that they all could see Him and offer Him a gift no matter how poor they might be. And He would show the way by doing all the giving first.

But now — how come? What have these city fathers to do with the coming of Christ? When He makes His entrance, He is going to tell the people about justice; He is going to warn them against cheating and graft and crooked politics. That also is one of the chief reasons of His coming. Justice! All mankind owes a debt that no man, even the greatest, can pay. And He, because He is God as well as man, is coming to pay that debt. Yes, He is coming in the name of justice.

And then to see such smirking and smiling injustice reeking and steaming from the souls of the conservatively-dressed and cleanly-shaved greeters who are on hand to give Him the key to the city! There's something wrong there. He loves the poor and the middle man and the young mother and father who are just making a go of it as the babies come tumbling down to them from the clouds of heaven. And He hates to see all these good folks cheated out of their money by office holders who are supposed to be ruling in His name which is the name of justice. It's just as though He were being cheated Himself.

Why then are the city fathers preparing for Him? Christmas actually doesn't mean a thing to them, for they've already told Christ they don't want to have a thing to do with Him. They did that when they began their careers of crookedness and bribery and discrimination. And now they're getting ready to take Him back in, but without changing their ways one little bit.

Is it another case of lack of logic? Maybe. But what goes on in the Infant's mind when He looks upon these whited sepulchres and detects the odor of the dead bones that lie within their starched shirts and their ample bosoms, as He begins to pass amongst them and hears them rattle and crack like the clapping of hands? Dead men's bones setting themselves up in holiday style to greet the King of Kings! Most likely He feels like saying: "Stop, stop! You have no more right to celebrate Christmas than have those others in the department stores. If my crib means anything at all, it means justice to all, even to humble and defenseless tax payers. But you don't want justice. Therefore you don't want Me. Stop, then, in your illogical celebration of Christmas which is the celebration of My coming."

BUT perhaps the greatest Christmastide illogicality of all dwells in the soft brains of those parents who are by no means Christians, yet who make the day of the birth of Christ a festive and gala day

for their children as though they really wanted its meaning to penetrate into the very bones and marrow of those children, never to be lost or cast aside. But they themselves have lost the meaning of Christmas and of Christ.

Wait. Don't talk. I know. Of course they're Christians. Everybody knows that. Ask their neighbors. Ask their minister. Ask the stars in the firmament of the heavens. They're not Mohammedans; they're not Jews; they're not worshippers of dragons or the sun. They even attend Church services on occasion. They must be Christians. And they have a right to celebrate Christmas themselves and see to it that their children celebrate the great feast too.

Yes, of course they're Christians—if to be a Christian means to do anything you want to do whether Christ had anything to say about it or not. They want to practice contraception because too many children are such a bore; and so they do. They want to formulate their own rules of morality, using a mind for that high work that not only has been weakened by original sin but one that can hardly add up two and two and get the right answer twice in succession; and so they do. They don't want to be bothered too much with the children that they have. And so they send them to a public school where the name of God is banned by law; and so they refuse to worry about their religious education as though religion were a form of weakness or disease; and so they do not give a thought to the instilling of the virtues except those that are advantageous to themselves (the parents) like obedience and patriotism; and so they teach them by the indirect method that there is such a Being as Christ—by using His name profanely.

And these have the effrontery or the illogicality to set up a Christmas tree in the front room of their homes, to cry out "Merry Christmas" to their offspring on Christmas morning, and to act as though Christ meant something more to them than a shadow of history and a name to be used when angry. These have the simplicity to act as though they were actually glad that Christ was coming, and that, in spite of the fact that Christ stands for everything that they are not and for nothing that they are. O tempora! O mores!

THE Russian Communists are not so bad after all. At least they have logic on their side. They're not whited sepulchres, even though they're wrong, and awfully wrong too. But Americans? May

God be good to them and freshen up their minds a bit. Logic would help them a lot.

Astrological Twins

St. Augustine at one time in his life dabbled in astrology, half believing that the position of the stars at one's birth influenced the course of one's life. His account of how he came to reject the "lying divinations and impious dotages of the astrologers" is a devastating rebuttal of their pseudo-science. A friend of his named Firminus told Augustine that his (Firminus') father had formerly believed in astrology, and this is what had occurred:

"At the time when Firminus' mother was about to give birth to him, a woman-servant attached to a friend of the family, was also with child, which could not escape her master, who took care with most exact diligence to know the births of his very puppies. And so it was that (the one for his wife, and the other for his servant, with the most careful observation, reckoning days, hours, nay, the lesser divisions of the hours,) both were delivered at the same instant; so that both were constrained to allow the same constellations, even to the minutest points, the one for his son the other for his new-born slave. For as soon as the women began to be in labour, they each gave notice to the other what was fallen out in their houses, and had messengers ready to send to one another, so soon as they had notice of the actual birth, of which they had easily provided, each in his own province, to give instant intelligence. Thus then the messengers of the respective parties met, he averred, at such an equal distance from either house that neither of them could make out any difference in the position of the stars, or any other minutest points; and yet Firminus, born in a high estate in his parents' house, ran his course through the gilded paths of life, was increased in riches, raised to honours; whereas that slave continued to serve his masters, without any relaxation of his yoke, as Firminus who knew him told me."

First Compliment

"Ah, Mr. Bunyan, that was a sweet sermon," said a devout parishioner to the author of *Pilgrim's Progress*, as he emerged from the church after a service. "You need not tell me that," was Bunyan's salty reply, "the devil whispered it in my ear before I was well out of the pulpit."

TALE OF THE TABLE-FORK

If someone invited you to dinner and placed no fork beside your plate, you would no doubt go hungry. It was not always so. Only in modern times have we become "furcifers."

A. ABADIE

TODAY, when a man sits down at table and picks up the table-fork, he picks up with it many grave obligations. One school of thought tells him that he must convey the food to his mouth on the convex side of the fork and under no circumstances must he switch the fork from the left to the right hand. Another school holds for the concave side as the only true side and it allows him to change the fork from hand to hand under certain circumstances. Never may he bury the fork in his mouth, so that its reappearance would be a revelation to the others at table with him. He must not eat half a prong-full of food and allow the other half to remain on the fork in midair; nor may he gesture with the fork to emphasize the point he wishes to make to his companion.

It was not always thus, however. For man is not essentially a fork-bearer, which, by the by, is the English of "Furcifer." No; that is one of his acquired traits, something he picked up along the way. Until the end of the sixteenth century, except in Italy, all classes of people bore food to their mouths either with their fingers or by means of their knives, which were pointed for this purpose.

The thought that crops up with this bit of historical lore is that eating in those days must have been a bit on the sloppy side. Such, however, was not the case, for rules for the use of the hands were just as stringent as are ours for the use of the fork. For instance, a child was admonished "not to blow his nose with the same hand with which he takes his food." Jean Sulpice, one of the *Emily Posts* of 1480, wrote out some rules to be followed at table. He says that it is wrong to grab your food with both hands at once; meat should be taken with three fingers. He notes that it is bad form to scratch the head and then put the fingers in the food. Erasmus in his *De Civilitate Morum Puerilium* (loosely, "Good Manners for Boys") says that it is wrong to lick the fingers or rub them on the jacket. Cardinal Richelieu was thoroughly

piqued with Chancellor Seguier for washing his hands in the sauce; so that must have been a breach of etiquette.

TABLE forks as we know them today were unknown until the fifteenth century and they were then known only in Italy. Thus we get the origin of the word from the Italian *furca*, or *forca* and *furchetta*. Thomas Coryat, an Englishman traveling on the Continent, published a book in 1611, called "Coryat's Crudities, hastily gabbled up in five months travels in France, Savoy, Italy, etc.," in which he clearly vouches for Italy as the original home of the fork. He writes: "I observed a custom in all those Italian cities and towns through which I passed, that is not used in any other country that I saw in my travels; neither do I think that any other nation of Christendom doth use it, but only Italy. The Italian and also most strangers do always at their meals use a little forke when they cut their meate. For while with their knife, which they hold in one hand, they cut the meate out of the dish, they fasten the forke which they hold in their other and, upon the same dish; so that whatsoever he be that sitting in the company of others at meals, should unadvisedly touch the dish of meat with his fingers, from which all the table doe cut, he will give occasion of offence unto the company, as having transgressed the laws of good manners, in so much that for his error he will be at least browbeaten, if not reprehended in words. This form of feeding, I understand, is generally used in all places of Italy; their forkes being for the most part made of yron, steeles, and some silver, but these are used only by gentlemen. The reason for this curiosity is, because the Italian cannot by any means indure to have his dish touched with fingers, seeing that all men's fingers are not alike clean. Hereupon, I myself thought good to imitate the Italian fashion by this forked cutting of meate, not only while I was in Italy, but also in Germany, and oftentimes in England since I came home; being once quipped for that frequent using of my forke, by a certain learned gentleman, a familiar friend of mine, Mr. Laurence Whitaker, who in his merry humour, doubted not to call me at table 'Furcifer,' only for using a forke at feeding, but for no other cause." (The writer disclaimed any other reason for the name, because originally "Furcifer" was applied to the instrument, fork-shaped, that was placed on the Roman slave as a punishment for some crime he committed.)

Coryat was not the first to have a fork outside of Italy, however. Almost a century before, Queen Elizabeth is known to have had not only one but several forks, but these were more for ornament than for use. "A fork slightly garnished with gold" and "a fork of christell, garnished with gold slightly, and sparks of garnets" had doubtless been presented to the queen as foreign curiosities of some value. Forks of gold and silver are mentioned in the inventories of Charles the V and VI of France, but those who have studied the question say that these were used only for eating mulberries and other foods likely to soil the fingers.

THE reasons why the fork did not quickly spread through the world were twofold. Until the eighteenth century when forks were made on a wholesale scale, they were not easy to acquire. Before this time forks were usually works of art, requiring an artist to produce the handle. Some handles were made of ivory inlaid with silver wire; others were of an engraved copper-gilt, jewelled and set with mother-o'-pearl. The carver showed his skill by cutting figures out of the ivory, usually of ladies in the costume of their day. Adam and Eve, Christ and His Apostles, St. John especially, were also objects of the carver's skill. Judith holding the head of Holofernes by the hair was also portrayed. Scantly clad personifications of Virtue and naked children climbing all over the handle of the fork were often chiseled out by the carver. Some other materials used were tortoise-shell, green-stained bone, rock crystal and silver, and amber, iron and steel. As one can readily see, skilled artisans were required for the making of forks and skilled artisans meant that the prices would be as high as the skill portrayed. Only the rich could afford them and the greater part of the people had to get along as they had always done — with their fingers.

The other reason for the fork's unpopularity was prejudice. As a new invention it had to oppose the habits and customs that were inbred in the human race since the beginning of time. One divine let his prejudice go so far that he preached against the fork, saying that it was an insult to Providence not to touch one's meat with one's fingers! There was the story, too, of an Oriental gentleman, who when dining with an Englishman, was invited to use a fork. "This fork," he said, "may have been in hundreds of mouths before mine, and among them possibly that of my enemy. The idea is repugnant to me."

THE LIGUORIAN

Scarcity of forks made it necessary for wealthy traveling men to carry their own forks. Unlike our modern hotels, that sometimes embarrass a guest with four forks when one is sufficient, the sixteenth century could not boast of such a grand display, if they could boast of any at all. This is where the ingenuity of the fork-artists was put to the test. The object was to put the knife, fork, and spoon in the smallest possible case. They devised a combination in which the prongs of the fork would fit into the handle of the knife and the blade of the knife into the handle of the fork, so that the whole looked like two handles put together. The most common design was the folding fork that closed much as a pocket knife does today. The most ingenious device of all was that made for Claes Ioost of Genga in 1592. It was a folding fork with a detachable spoon and a toothpick set in the top of the handle!

HOW many prongs did the first forks have? The usual number was two, but it is not true that the lesser the number of prongs the older the fork. It is known that from the beginning of fork-history the two- three- and four-pronged fork were used. Some traveling forks had only one prong and looked much like the instrument we use nowadays to pick pecans out of their shell. The two-pronged fork resembled our present day oyster fork.

By the middle of the seventeenth century forks were used only by the highest classes in England. Near the end of the same century few nobles had more than a dozen forks to their name. It was only in the beginning of the nineteenth century that forks were generally introduced among all classes of people. This was due to the mass production of them in Sheffield, England, when the handles were covered with thin silver stamped in relief. From this time on the fork was no longer a luxury but something cheap and easily acquired. However, it still has conquests to make, for example, in China where chop-sticks are almost universally used.

Aesthetically speaking the popularization of the fork brought about its degeneration from a thing of beauty into an object eminently practical. From then unto the present day it has been viewed as an ordinary object for domestic use; it definitely has lost its ancient glamor. You might say it is expressive of our modern age. It simply reeks with pragmatism: it is beautiful, because it works; it is good, because it is useful. May the fork-Muses save us from such a narrow conception of

the beautiful and good, and may the forks, remaining ever useful, return to the glory that was their own before they became so cheap and so ugly!

The Origin of Christmas Cards

The practice of sending Christmas cards is not so very old; it is said to have begun about the middle of the last century. It was customary at that period for poor scholars, who were dependent upon benefactions for their tuition, to prepare carefully written letters at the approach of the holidays. In these letters they exploited and extolled whatever progress they had made during the previous term. To make them even more impressive, they ornamented them with many flourishes of the pen and fancy designs. They then took the finished product and exhibited it at the homes of their various benefactors, thus delicately expressing their hopes for future assistance.

In 1846 a card was designed by J. C. Horsley which was perhaps the first Christmas card properly so called. One thousand cards of Horsley's design were printed, and a few years ago one of them sold for \$250. At first they were of the same size as ordinary visiting cards, with a simple inscription: "Merry Christmas" and a few flourishes of the pen. Gradually more elaborate designs began to appear, and in 1868, writes an old chronicler, "seeing a growing want and the great sale obtained abroad, Goodall and Son produced a Little Red Riding Hood, and Hermit and his Cell, and many other subjects in which snow and the robin played a part."

Apparently these early pioneers entirely missed the religious significance of their work, and their tradition has come down to recent years. It is only within the last few years that Little Red Riding Hood and the Robins in the snow have begun to be replaced by the Infant Jesus and the Wise Men on Christmas Cards.

Parallel

The man who says that since there are so many opinions in the world (since the Reformation) as to the true religion, therefore there is no true religion — is like the man who would have said some years ago: there are so many opinions in the world as to the shape of the earth (flat, round, etc.), therefore there is no earth.

THOUGHT FOR THE SHUT-IN

L. F. HYLAND

Christmas for Shut-ins

It is possible and not unusual for apparently good Christians to celebrate Christmas in a very hearty, ostentatious manner, without any of its practical significance penetrating into their souls. Midnight Mass, visits to the crib, good wishes to friends, parties and gatherings—all these constitute Christmas in some people's lives. Yet they become not a whit more humble, though they celebrate the humiliation of the God-Man in the crib. They give up some pet sin, perhaps, just long enough to go to Communion on Christmas; but they go back to the sin soon after Christmas is over. They still think, even while they shed a sympathetic tear over the abandonment of Christ in the stable, that their own life would be ruined if they had to give up a tiny part of the material comfort and pride of possession that are theirs.

That is where the shut-in has the advantage over others. Christmas is not merely a drama to him, nor a pretty scene, nor a touching bit of play-acting on the part of Christ. To the shut-in, Christmas is essentially a proof given by God that the world's riches are not worth owning, that bodily comfort is not necessary to peace, that aloneness is not loneliness so long as it brings the companionship of God. Christmas gives to the shut-in the sudden realization that if God chose a hard and painful birth and life for Himself, then it must be His best friends to whom He now gives a share in the same.

Yes, the shut-in must feel at Christmas how near he is to Christ. The Infant Saviour lies on straw; the bed of the shut-in is often as straw because it gives no rest. The Infant is abandoned by the wealthy and powerful, and attended only by the poor herders of sheep; so too it is only the simple and humble and poor who make a practice of visiting the sick. The Infant has little to look forward to except a cross, but a cross that will save the world from its sins; so too the shut-in has suffering before him, but like the sufferings of Christ it can help to save the world.

Surely, then, you who are shut-ins are not in danger of letting Christmas be but an act on a stage. It is an act of God in your heart, warming you with the realization that your helplessness and suffering are not to no purpose—never in vain!

CHRISTMAS IN EUROPE

This Christmas should evoke one great universal prayer from the hearts of all for peace. Stories like this will intensify that prayer.

J. SCHAEFFER

WAR is a terrifying thing in that it destroys thousands of lives. In the wake of that destruction many other beautiful things are destroyed. This year it is trying to rob the world of Christmas. It is tearing up or burning down the Christmas trees. It is robbing children of the spirit of Santa Claus. It is taking the Infant and the straw and the animals out of the crib. If you don't believe it read on and see what the war has already done to some of the most beautiful Christmas customs of Europe.

One of the oldest and most touching of European Christmas customs is to be found among the staunch Catholic families of the Tyrol mountains and valleys. After the Christmas eve supper the mother places a large bowl of milk on the table and arranges around it the spoons of each member of the family. It is a legend that the Christ-Child and the Virgin Mother, while passing through the village will stop for rest and food, and that the persons whose spoons the holy pair use will be blessed in an especial manner during the coming year.

We can imagine the parents stealing into the room before they go to Midnight Mass, changing the position of one or two of the children's spoons. They may have in mind a little present for them during the coming year — perhaps a trip to the city or some wonderful gift. Imagine the happiness of the children on finding that their spoons were used by the Child Jesus and His Mother and at the prospect of inconceivable delights in the New Year.

But this Christmas? . . . The hands of the mother and father will, perhaps, shake, their minds, too, be filled with vague apprehension as they change the position of the spoons on this Christmas-eve. For what happiness can they promise their little ones next year? Will the army take their young boy? Will the hunger and sickness of the winter months even leave themselves to care for the children, or spare the health and lives of the little ones?

IN MANY parts of Germany, throughout Ireland and in other European countries the people have the custom on Christmas eve of placing lighted candles in each of their front windows. With these they hope to light the way of the Christ-Child as He passes through their streets. — But will the ominous sounds of enemy bombers and stringent black-out laws put out even these little lights this Christmas eve? Will the Infant Jesus be forced to stumble blindly through Europe this Christmas?

AMONG the Slovaks of southern Europe Christmas eve is celebrated with almost ritual-like customs. Their only meal of the day, taken late in the evening, is a sumptuous banquet. Abundant helpings of all their favorite dishes are placed upon the table; baskets of fruits, nuts and cookies, too, are arrayed among the other eatables. So bountiful is this meal supposed to be that the partakers are forbidden to take up again any piece of food that may have fallen from their plates.

Even amid their happy moments these simple people remember their loved ones who are not present at the meal. Should a son or daughter have left the family circle, or should death have stolen one from their midst, the absent member is touchingly brought to mind. A place is left vacant for him, so that a mother's tears and a father's blessing may follow the wanderer, or the prayers of all be offered to the Christ-Child for the departed.

During the evening the young men of the parish, attired as shepherds, go from house to house singing carols. They are admitted to the dining-room, place their little crib, their 'Bethlehem,' on the table, and honor the Infant Jesus with beautiful Christmas carols. The people of the house load them with gifts of cookies, nuts and fruits and a donation of money for the Church or the poor.

But this Christmas? . . . Will the Slovaks be able to gather so many eatables for even their Christmas eve meal? With what care will these hungry people watch lest particles of food fall from their plates! And as the mother's and father's glance passes round the table, how many empty places will their tear-filled eyes encounter — places of sons or a husband killed in battle, or loved ones carried away by want? Will the carols of the 'shepherds' be as merry, their baskets as full of gifts, their pockets receive as generous donations for the Church and the poor as on former Christmas eves?

THE Polish people have grasped the spirit of love and peace which pervade Christmastide. They, too, have centered their simple, beautiful Christmas customs around the Christmas eve supper. After a day of fasting the family gathers about the table. A few wisps of straw have been placed under each plate to remind its owner of the love of the Babe of Bethlehem. Nine separate dishes are served at the supper—in honor of the nine choirs of angels, whose message on the first Christmas night was: "Peace on earth to men of good will."

This Christmas eve meal the Polish people call their 'Love Supper'!—But will love rule over their Christmas eve this year? Can love rule while their country is crushed, their homes and lives endangered by a dread invader? Will the peace of the angels, of the Babe in the manger reign over hearts where fear and dread have dwelt for so long a time?

ON CHRISTMAS EVE in many parts of France the people darken their houses to commemorate the darkness and quiet of the grotto of Bethlehem. Between eleven o'clock and midnight bands of carolers pass through the streets. They knock at each door. And when the owner of the house demands who they are the group bursts into the 'Noel,' the Christmas song to the Blessed Mother. The door of the house is thrown open and, still singing, the carolers enter, completing their song while they stand about the fire-place.

They then approach the mother of the family with baskets, touchingly asking her to give them some gifts "in the name of the Blessed Mother." Into the basket of each she pours the bounty of her table—nuts, candies, fruits, fowl, eggs—saying to each: "for the love of Jesus." The carolers then depart to repeat the ceremony at other doors.

Will this Christmas eve be such a joyous one in France? Will the song of the carolers be heard joyfully ringing from door to door? Will they have the courage to ask their stricken countrymen for their usual Christmas-alms "in the name of the Blessed Mother?" Will the people themselves have anything to give "for the love of Jesus?"

MOST of the lovable old Christmas customs of England disappeared long ago with the spread of Puritanism. But some have survived to this day. It is, for instance, from England that our Christmas

greeting "Merry Christmas" comes. In many parts of England groups of children still go about on Christmas eve singing their beloved Christmas carols. They are the 'waits' immortalized in Dickens' "Christmas Carol." And it is still customary in some villages for the people to express their joy by illuminating their churches. They vie with one another in bringing lighted candles to church—so that on early Christmas morning the Churches are one glorious flood of light.

But this Christmas? . . . Will the "Merry Christmas" of the English be extended in the hearty, confident, jovial tone of old—or will it, too, take on the fear that each feels gripping his heart? Will the carols of the children ring out joyfully from the street-corners or will they, perhaps, be muffled in bomb-shelters or heard only in the country-districts? Will the churches be illuminated by the innumerable candles of the faithful or will they, too, be extinguished by bombing raids and black-out laws?

AN OLD Christmas legend tells us that a wren had built its nest in the crib of Bethlehem and that it joined its sweet, liquid notes with the voices of the angels in praising the new-born Saviour. For this reason it is said to have received the quaint name of "Our Lady's Hen."—In many parts of Norway the peasants buy great sheaves of grain before Christmas. They place these outside on Christmas eve that the birds who were the first of the animal kingdom to honor the Christ-Child might not go hungry on this blessed night.—Will these poor people be able to give but a few sheaves of grain to the birds this Christmas eve? Perhaps war has not left them enough grain to keep themselves from starvation. . . .

DO YOU believe, now, that war is trying to destroy Christmas?—But it will not succeed! With its horrible train of death, destruction, famine, bombing, black-outs, fear and despair it may force these beautiful old Christmas customs into hiding. But never will it succeed in destroying them.

Catholics of the United States, these beautiful Christmas customs of Europe plead with us to join our Holy Father in beseeching the Christ-Child to bring His peace once again to the world; they urge us to pray that the people of Europe next Christmas will once again greet the birth of the Infant Jesus with their beautiful Christmas customs!

THE CURING OF MRS. McHUGH

(The form of verse here used has been popularized by a very prominent author. It adapts itself so perfectly to the theme of this masterpiece that we feel the plagiarism of form to be of small moment.)

There once lived a woman named Mrs. Mortimer J. McHugh.
And at church she always used to sit right at the very end of
the pew;
No one could ever accuse her of being a rover,
She sat at the end of the pew with a look in her eye which said:
You'd better not expect *me* to move over!
And when anyone asked her to make room she sat there im-
placable as death,
And dirty looks had no effect on her, nor did remarks passed
under the breath.
And even if people stumbled over her feet she showed no sign
of conciliation,
Although everyone around laughed, and the poor stumbler
found it quite a humiliation.
There was a man who in our story shall go nameless,
Though he deserves a monument for his remarkable spunk and
his gameness,
This hero, though he weighed 250 pounds, was ordinarily the
meekest of men,
But after stumbling past Mrs. McHugh he said: "It's not
going to happen again!"
So the next time he came to church he approached her and
said: "Make room please" in a tone devoid of frigidity.
But Mrs. McHugh only maintained her customary rigidity.
And he pretended to go past her into the pew, as on the previous
morning,
When suddenly without warning,
Carelessly, as if he didn't care a rap,
He sat down right on Mrs. McHugh's lap!
Well! Imagine how she felt! She was far from being as gentle
as a dove,
And she gave our hero an extraordinarily tremendous shove,
And getting up, she marched out of church looking like the
picture of wrath,
And everybody around smiled, but believe me! they were care-
ful to keep out of her path.
This good lady went home, and thinking it over decided to
profit by what had taken place,
Even though for days a blush of mortification kept mounting
to her face.
And never again, even though in church there were only a few
Did she venture to occupy with obstinacy the last seat in a
pew,
Which must be held to the everlasting credit of Mrs. Mortimer
J. McHugh.

—L. G. Miller.

A BONUS FOR JOE

Every now and then you meet a "Joe" — even in these days when the more common rule is "Look out for No. 1." They make Christmas real.

L. G. MILLER

"JOE," said Tony Meyer, "I'm curious. You don't have to tell me if you don't want to, but I would like to know what you plan on doing with your hundred dollar bonus."

It was a few minutes before opening time in Sealyham's Department Store, "Largest In The City, With Everything For The Home." Tony Meyer was smoking a last cigarette in the cloak room before taking up his duties in the shoe department, and Joe Tannenbaum, his friend, was struggling into a curious red suit trimmed in white. On a table nearby was a set of bushy white whiskers. Even a casual observer would have known in a moment what the red suit and whiskers signified. They were the traditional makeup for Santa Claus, who every year made it a point to spend the three weeks previous to Christmas on exhibition at Sealyham's Fourth Floor, Toy Department, where all day long he sat amidst a shifting throng of wide-eyed children and harassed mothers. All day long amidst the noise of electric trains, mechanical toys, and people talking, he sat and submitted to being gazed upon and pointed at and talked to by a score of children at once, while the fond mothers shrilled above the noise that Santa would have nothing to do with bad little boys and girls. "Isn't that so, Santa Claus?" with a knowing wink. "Yes. I haven't any toys in my big bag for bad little boys and girls. No siree!" Thus Joe, in his deep and resonant voice.

It was a long day and a tiring day, but Joe Tannenbaum didn't mind it. This was the tenth year he had been substituting for Santa, and he was enjoying it as much as the first time he had put on the white whiskers. And Sealyham's had been so appreciative of his long service that this year they were giving him a hundred dollar bonus in recognition of same.

"Well, I haven't quite decided what I'm going to do with the money," said Joe, in answer to Tony's question.

"Why don't you put it into a car, Joe? You've been wanting to buy a car for some time, haven't you?"

"Yes I have, Tony, and that's a good idea. I might do that. One hundred dollars would give me a good start on a nice little runabout."

"Well, I wish you would. It's about time you do something for yourself for a change. You've always been so free and easy with your money, it's a wonder you've got a roof over your head. It's all right to be generous, I always say, but after all, charity begins at home."

"That's right, Tony. Charity does begin at home, and it's about time I realize it." And so saying, Joe picked up the whiskers lying on the table and draped them around his face.

But there was something in his tone which made Tony Meyer look at him suspiciously. These two had been close friends for thirty years, and knew each other pretty well after such a long period of intimacy. But before he could dispense any more fraternal advice or admonition, the clock struck the hour of eight, and both of them had to hurry to their respective posts.

JOE TANNENBAUM was a bachelor for whom it seemed that marriage was definitely out of the picture. He was not yet middle-aged, but he was bordering on it, and while his happy disposition and unfailing good humor had made him and still made him more than eligible in the eyes of not a few feminine acquaintances, somehow or other Joe Tannenbaum had gone through his 41 years of life without even coming close to being engaged. Perhaps he was at fault for shirking his responsibilities. Perhaps there were reasons for his bachelorhood of which his friends knew nothing. We shall let it go at that.

Joe was a little inclined to corpulency now, and this in itself helped to make him an ideal Santa Claus. With his red, beaming face, his twinkling eyes, and his extensive mid-section, he had no need of padding himself in order to look the part of Santa. Give him the red and white suit and the whiskers, and he was as typical a St. Nick as you could find anywhere. In the off-seasons at Sealyham's, Joe Tannenbaum sold glassware in the cutlery department, second floor. But at Christmas for a few weeks he basked in the glory of being Santa.

After work Joe and Tony usually went home together. Tony was a married man, with five small but husky children; Joe lived by himself in a set of rooms nearby.

"I'd like to stop in and see my sister Alice for a minute on the way

home, if you don't mind," said Joe, as they emerged from the employees' entrance of Sealyham's.

"Sure thing. I haven't seen Alice in a long time, so I'll stop in with you. How are she and the husband making out?"

"Well, things seem to be going along pretty well after all their hard luck. Ned was laid off for a while, you know, and that put quite a strain on them. Alice is rather quick, though she doesn't mean anything by it, and she's a wonderful mother to her little boy, but I guess poor Ned comes in for his share of scoldings."

"It's too bad," said Tony, shaking his head sadly. Tony's wife was a placid woman whom no one had ever yet seen in a state of excitement, so Tony found it hard to understand how any woman could be otherwise.

"What I think is this, Joe," Tony went on, "and I wouldn't say it if I wasn't an old friend of yours. I think you pamper that sister of yours too much. Why I think you'd give her your last cent, if she was to ask you for it."

Joe said nothing, but Tony with the insight born of long friendship thought he looked guilty. Joe always looked like a guilty schoolboy when he was meditating some new benefaction. But before he could press the point, they arrived at Alice's home.

Alice Bronson was a sharp-featured, bird-like little woman whose housekeeping was of that vigorous nature which kept every single article in a state of perpetual glister. No particle of dust ever rested quietly in her house; in fact, her eyes seemed to be darting around the room even while she talked searching for some unlucky cobweb. Her little six-year old son Jackie, who always presented the appearance of having been scrubbed within an inch of his life, sat quietly on his chair looking adoringly at his Uncle Joe.

"Isn't Ned home yet?" asked Joe.

"No, he's working overtime again," said Alice. "He's glad to have the chance, too. Heaven knows, we need the money."

"Things aren't going so well, eh?" said Joe, while Tony looked uneasy. The need of money was a subject upon which Alice could talk indefinitely, and often did.

"No. We're still paying for the house, you know, and then there's the taxes. And even without, you know how the cost of living has gone up. It's simply deadful." Alice sighed and folded her hands in her lap resignedly.

"And I suppose you're still paying for Jackie's operation, too," said Joe. Jackie had almost died a year previous from mastoid trouble; only a very delicate operation had saved his life.

"Oh yes, we've got nearly a hundred dollars to pay on that yet." A bell rang in Tony Meyer's brain, and he looked quickly at his friend. But Joe elaborately refused to return the glance.

"Nearly a hundred dollars, eh?" said Joe, musingly.

"How has Ned been feeling," said Tony, anxious to change the subject.

"Oh, he's feeling all right," said Alice. "By the way, Joe, you're going to have dinner with us on Christmas as usual, aren't you?"

"Sure thing," Joe answered. "Come here, Jackie. If you look through all my pockets, it's just possible that you might find a piece of candy." With a whoop, Jackie ran across the room and flung himself upon his uncle. Alice clicked her tongue disapprovingly, but she said nothing. She was fond of Joe in her own way, even though her affection did not appear very often on the surface.

A FEW minutes later Joe and Tony were continuing their walk homeward.

"I say, Joe," said Tony, in a tone which he intended to sound very casual, "You spoke this morning of putting your hundred dollar bonus into a car. What make of car have you got in mind?"

Joe Tannenbaum coughed and looked embarrassed.

"Well now, Tony," he said, "as a matter of fact I haven't decided — that is — I don't know for sure whether I want a car or not. I might invest the money."

"It wouldn't," said Tony, not without sarcasm, "be an investment in doctor's bills would it? Or in paying off the debt on somebody's house, not saying whose?"

"— Ah — I don't know what you mean."

"I don't suppose you do," said Joe, with continued sarcasm.

"My investment is going to be a confidential one," said Joe, pretending to be very dignified and severe.

"Oh yes, it'll be confidential, all right. I wish," said Tony, standing still and looking at his friend, "I wish I knew what was going on in your mind. If it's what I think it is, then my advice is don't do it."

THE LIGURIAN

"Why, Tony, I — ah — don't know what you mean," said Joe, for the second time.

"Don't do it, Joe," repeated Tony. "Think of yourself for a change."

"Now don't you worry, Tony. This investment of mine is going to be a good one. And now, if you don't mind, let's talk about something else."

CHRISTMAS Day dawned cold and clear, with the snow delightfully crisp beneath one's feet along the sidewalks. Throughout the morning the cheery voices of men and women going to or returning home from church could be heard wishing each other a Merry Christmas, while the ringing church bells seemed to have a special note of joyousness for the occasion. Children ranged up and down the streets trying out their new sleds to the peril of passersby, and sucking on peppermint sticks while they delightedly exhaled the frosty air, pretending that it was smoke. At Tony Meyer's home a typical Christmas celebration took place; the house echoed all day long with screams of delight, much laughing, and an occasional song.

It was Joe Tannenbaum's custom to spend the evening of Christmas day at the home of his friend Tony, and when he appeared about six o'clock he was holding little Jackie by the hand.

"Merry Christmas, everybody," was his greeting as he shook the snow from his overcoat and stamped his feet in the hallway. The Meyer children at the first glimpse of him had rushed around him and were clinging to his arms and clothes, threatening to trample on little Jackie, who manfully kept a tight grip on Joe's left hand.

"Merry Christmas, Tony," said Joe, shaking loose his right hand and holding it out to Tony Meyer over the heads of the children.

"Merry Christmas to you, Joe," said Tony, and there was a warmth in the greeting of these two old friends which made it sound as if it were being shouted for the first time instead of the thousandth.

"Children! Children! — hello, Joe — don't kill the poor man!" cried Mrs. Meyer as she came in from the kitchen. But Joe good-naturedly let himself be dragged and pushed into the sun parlor, where he had to express approval of the Christmas tree and each separate gift lying beneath it.

"Alice and Ned had some people drop in from out of town," said Joe, when, surrounded by the children, he finally settled himself upon

the sofa, "so they were glad to have me take Jackie off their hands for an hour or so."

"And did you have a nice Christmas, Jackie?" asked Tony.

"Oh yes," was the reply.

What did Santa Claus bring you?" asked Tommy, the youngest of the Meyer children, about the same age as Jackie.

"Oh, he brought me lots of things. A sled and a football and an Erector set. But the best thing of all he brought me, Mama says, was something else."

"What was it?"

"It was a lot of money so that Dad and Mother could pay my doctor bills."

Tony Meyer stopped short in the operation of lighting his pipe.

"You don't say so, Jackie," he said. "Santa brought you that, did he?" Joe was looking imploringly at him, but Tony pretended to be in blissful ignorance of the fact.

"Yup," replied Jackie, rather indistinctly, his mouth being filled with one end of a gigantic candy cane.

"And how do you suppose Santa found out about those doctor bills?" went on Tony. He was enjoying himself hugely, as he noted Joe's embarrassment out of the corner of his eye.

"Oh, he knows about all those things," said Jackie.

"He certainly does," said Tony grimly. "And what did Santa Claus bring your Uncle Joe, Jackie? Did he bring him a nice new automobile?"

Jackie took the candy cane from his mouth and looked surprised.

"No," he said. Then he turned to Joe. "Is that what you asked him for, Uncle Joe?"

"That's what your Uncle Joe asked him for, all right," said Tony, "but Santa has a pretty tough time of it with your Uncle Joe, Jackie. He just won't cooperate." Then he rose from his chair, went over to Joe, and stood before him while the children stared round-eyed.

"Joe," said Tony, "I shouldn't be saying it to your face, but you're the finest man I ever hope to know."

"Oh, bosh," said Joe Tannenbaum, as he clumsily lifted his large bulk from the sofa. "You're talking through your hat, man. Let's go out into the kitchen and have a bottle of beer."

FOR WIVES AND HUSBANDS ONLY

D. F. MILLER

Complaint: What can a wife do to induce her husband to give up practices of birth-prevention? I'm not afraid to have a large family and I am afraid to go on through married life committing sin. He claims that we cannot afford to have more children than the two we have; he protests that he will not put more burdens upon me. He maintains that he is a Catholic, but refuses to obey God's law in this regard.

Solution: This is another of those problems that we believe should be thoroughly discussed before marriage, at least at the time when the instruction is given to a couple as to what is right and wrong in marriage. In many dioceses a definite statement must be signed to the effect that the persons to be married will not make use of contraceptive practices. It would be a good thing if the Catholic young woman (and also the Catholic young man) would make sure before marriage that their partner-to-be is sincere in promising that there will be no sinful misuse of marriage.

When the problem arises after marriage, the loyal Catholic partner is of course bound to use every persuasive means to win the other away from sin, and not to give the appearance of consent to wrongful actions. For a wife to convince a husband who is stubborn in this matter requires patience, intelligence, prayer and perseverance. She should inform herself thoroughly, by reading and consultation, on the different aspects of the subject: why it is contrary to nature; why it is harmful to married happiness; why it can have worse results than the bearing of many children. She should make a point of the fact that God does not command married people to have many children, but does demand that if they freely use their privileges they must be willing to bear the responsibilities that accompany them. She should convince herself that a large family is not a curse but a blessing; that even among the poor it will reward a mother and father with a happy and secure middle life and old age, as exemplified to the last degree by an article in the *American Magazine* of December in which a mother of fifteen children tells how at the age of 49 she thanks God for every one of her children and for the health and happiness and good times that are hers. Then patiently a wife must try to transfer her convictions into the mind of her husband. Where one partner has real love and true Catholic convictions, backed by knowledge of the subject, the problem will never be insurmountable.

MACARONI-CAROLS

Take a glimpse back into the middle ages, and lend your ear to the songs men sang, when Christmas belonged to all.

B. J. HOPKINS

MACARONI-CAROLS would at first sight seem to have something to do with Christmas evening in the home of an Italian peasant family. But actually this is the name of a literary-musical form that has less to do with Italy than with Germany, Holland, England, France and other countries. The "carol" part of the term is the musical half, and means popularly a simple song of joyous character celebrating the Birth of Christ.

The "macaroni" element does not refer to anything edible, but derives from the literary oddity called macaronic verse which, to be short, is verse written in two or more languages instead of the one-language mode of expression. Although such linguistic medleys were known as early as the tenth century, they were recognized as a distinct literary form only about 1550. This was due to the work of a Benedictine monk, Teofilo Folengo, who labored at an epic poem in three-language verse, and who informs us in the introduction to his masterpiece that macaronic poetry is so called because "like that melange of paste, butter, cheese and spice after which it is named, it should be coarse and popular." For a time this macaronic verse enjoyed great popularity throughout Europe, and it was used for plays and poems of all kinds. When Christmas carols were composed in this mixed-up style, the result was what we call Macaroni-Carols.

Some carols merely have at the end of each line or stanza a foreign language refrain of two or three words, such as "Alleluia" or "Deo Gratias" or "Christus natus est," which, however, have no grammatical connection with the thought of the previous line. Here for example is a beautiful old English carol:

When Christ was born of Mary free,
In Bethlehem, in that fair citie,
Angels sang there in mirth and glee,
In Excelsis Gloria!

Herdsmen beheld these angels bright
To them appearing with great light,

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Who said: "God's Son is born this night,"
In Excelsis Gloria!

This King is come to save mankind,
As in Scripture truths we find;
Therefore this song have we in mind,
In Excelsis Gloria!

Then, Lord, for Thy great grace,
Grant us the bliss to see Thy face,
Where we may sing to Thy solace.
In Excelsis Gloria.

Other carols, more properly macaronics, have a similar refrain of several words in a foreign language which continues the sense of the foregoing lines. The following carol dates back to the days of Henry VI of England in the fifteenth century:

A Babe is born of a may (maid)
In the salvation of us
To them we sing both night and day
Veni Sancte Spiritus! (Come, Holy Ghost!)

At Bethlehem, that blessed place,
The Child of bliss, born He was;
Him to serve God give us grace,—
O Lux beata Trinitas! (O Light, Blessed Trinity!)

There came three kings out of the east
To worship the King that is so free
With gold and myrrh and frankincense,—
A solis ortus cardine. (Coming from the bright east)

The herds heard an Angel cry,
A merry song then sung he:
Why are ye so sore aghast?
Jam ortus solis cardine! (He has come from the bright east)

The Angel came down with a cry;
A fair song then sung he:
In the worship of the Child,
Gloria tibi Domine! (Glory be to Thee, O Lord)

BESIDES the carols, which were sung at Christmas, there were other carols called *Noels Royaux* which were sung on festive occasions in the lives of English and French kings and queens. One, called *The Boar's Head Carol*, was first sung, according to the ancient chronicler, at the banquet celebrating the coronation of Henry I of England. Not long afterwards we find reference to it's being sung every Christmas at Queen's College, Oxford. The carol itself is very familiar; according to the tradition at Oxford, it was to be sung by a steward carrying a cooked boar's head into the dining hall, followed by the students in procession who took up the refrain. The legend behind it is that long

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ago one of the students found himself face to face with an enormous wild boar; things looked pretty dark for the scholar until he had the happy inspiration of thrusting his Latin text-book down the throat of the beast, who promptly perished as a result of this inhuman treatment. Here is the carol:

The boar's head in hande bringe I,
With garlands gay and rosemary,
I pray you all sing merrily,
(*Chorus*) Qui estis in convivio. (Who are in good fellowship)

The boar's head, I understande,
Is the chiefe service in the lande;
Look, wheresoever it be fande,
(*Chorus*) Servite cum cantico! (Serve it with a song)

Our steward hath given this,
In honor of the King of Bliss,
Which on this day now served is,
(*Chorus*) In Regimensi atrio. (in the royal dining hall)

One of the most famous of the Macaroni-Carols is the *In Dulci Jubilo*, which is more than six hundred years old. Here it is; with English substituted for the original German in some of the lines:

In dulci jubilo (In sweet Jubilee)
Let us our homage show,
Our heart's joy reclineth
In praesepio (in a manger)
And like a bright star shineth,
Matris in gremio, (on the breast of His mother)
Alpha es et O, Alpha es et O! (Alpha and Omega thou art.)
O Jesu Parvule, (O little Jesus)
My heart is all for Thee
I beseech Thee
My prayer let it reach Thee,
O Princeps gloriae, (O prince of glory)
Trahe me post te! (Draw me after Thee.)

SOMEWHAT connected with the Macaroni-Carols were the cleverly written little Christmas plays of the Middle Ages in which the actors were animals. More than anything else do they convey the simple and familiar spirit which the people had towards the things of God. We learn of these Christmas plays from old prints in which each of the animals is shown with a scroll leading from its mouth with the words on it that each is supposed to say.

The cock croweth "Christus natus hodie" (Christ is born today)
The raven asketh "Quando?" (When?)
The cow replieth "Hac nocte" (This night.)

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The ox crieth "Ubi, ubi?" (Where? Where?)
The sheep bleateth: "In Bethlehem."

Traces of similar dramas are found in various parts of Europe.

In the medieval times it was popularly believed that the oxen knelt in their stalls and that bees sang in their hives at the hour in which Christ was born. Shakespeare speaks of something similar:

Some say that ever 'gainst that season comes
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
This bird of dawning singeth all night long.
So hallowed and so gracious is the time.

A modern carol-writer, A. J. Proctor, gives a poetic version of the animals' play described above:

In Bethlehem that city blest,
"Jesu Christus natus est" rang the cry of Chanticleer,
"Quando?" croaked the raven drear;
"Hac nocte" cawed the rook's quaint note;
"Ubi?" moored the Ox's throat;
"Bethlehem" the Sheep's bleat told.
There angels sang o'er shepherds' fold,
"Gaudeamus" brayed the Ass,
That such glory came to pass.
Verbum caro factum est,
God in man made manifest,
Alleluia, Alleluia.

Carol singing is a somewhat nostalgic reminder of the ages of childlike faith; and those who are at all acquainted with the manner of life in those far days will regret to see our Christmas carols gradually falling into disuse.

Wild West Literary Criticism

In the literary journals which were being published in California about the middle of the last century, the quality of the poetry and the rough-hewn editorials upon it reflect the rough, pioneering spirit of the days of the Gold Rush. Once an ambitious contributor sent in to a magazine called *The Golden Era* a Scotch ballad entitled "To a Flea" and evidently written in imitation of Robert Burns' "To a Louse." The editor examined the poem carefully, and then sent it back to the poet with this comment: "The first stanza is very Scotch, the next is slightly Scotch, the next is Scotchless, and all the rest are nix Scotch. It is a pity you did not imbibe more Burns before you burst." Duly scotched, the poem was returned to the editor and appeared in the next issue of the magazine.

MORE ABOUT WOMEN'S HATS

Few articles ever published in *THE LIGUORIAN* brought a greater flood of comment than the one about women's hats of a few months ago. Here is one contribution to the subject that includes the ideas of many others.

H. S. SMITH

ANENT the article "On Women's Hats" which appeared in the October, 1941, issue of *THE LIGUORIAN*, the observations made by E. F. Miller, the author, are undeniably true; there are, however, some facts he has failed to note, and when treating a subject that is of such intense interest to so many people and especially to the gentler, yet the more powerful sex, it is well to give this important item of feminine apparel its full and proper consideration.

Let it be understood at the very outset that few women's hats, if indeed any, really conform to the definition of the word. Why should a woman need a covering for her head when God has blessed her with her hair, her crowning glory, and when she is practically immune to the affliction of *alopecia* so common to the stronger sex? It would be more proper to define a woman's hat as an essential piece of decorative feminine apparel, for if we judge it by its practicality, we can say nothing more of it than that it is manufactured, sold and worn for one purpose alone—to add a final touch of garnishment to the symphony of the whole dress ensemble. With this admission made, it is easy to understand why a woman must possess not one, but at least several different pieces of head gear, for the shape, color, material and style of hat will depend first and foremost on the style of hair-dress she is wearing.

If the vogue at the time happens to be the pompadour style, then the hat must be what is called an 'off the face' model; it is made to be perched miraculously on the back of the head, to frame the face properly, to flatter the hair-do and show it off to advantage. 'Bangs,' masses of curls, or a clever arrangement of waves and curlicues will allow such triumphs of originality as Butterfly Bonnets, Turbans, the Calot, sailors, skull caps, Toques, pillboxes, and the Cloche. The latest creation is called a 'Casque' and is a helmet like affair which, much as the 'swathed turban,' covers the hair completely and frames the face so

that it will be the center of attraction, calling attention at the same time to facial beauty accentuated by flawless makeup and complexion.

The color of the hair will dictate somewhat the color of the hat. A straw-colored blonde will not wear a natural straw-colored hat but will indulge in chapeaux of light blue or pastel shades. In choosing a hat Madame will consider not only the style of hair dress she is wearing and the color of her hair but also her whole dress ensemble. Sport clothes and business dresses, for instance, demand the casual tailored type of hat; afternoon and street dresses call for hats that are more elaborate and decorative. Cocktail and dinner dresses require some sort of head-piece; it may be a coronet of flowers, or a few small ostrich feathers or perhaps a bow of ribbons or a piece of ornamental jewelry; it may even be one of those ultra-fashionable 'draped hoods' attached to the dress itself which tends to give the profile a Madonna-like look. As a general rule milady's hat matches the color and style of her shoes, purse, gloves, and so forth, through the whole gamut of feminine apparel.

CONSIDERING these facts we must speak of women's hats, not as hats indeed, but as ornaments which are just as necessary to proper feminine appearance as powder, rouge and lip-stick. Whether the hat really conforms to the definition of a hat or whether it is just a composite of cleverly arranged perky bows, satiney ribbons, wispy veils and sleek feathers makes no real difference; it may resemble an inverted flower pot—it may suggest a bird in flight, a basket of fruit or even Pike's Peak or Niagara Falls, still, if it adds a bit of adornment or attractiveness to a woman's attire, its reason for existence and use is entirely defensible.

The psychological effect that a woman's hat produces on its wearer cannot be overlooked. Women have confessed that a certain new millinery creation, as they saw it on a mannequin in a store window, would so charm them and haunt them that peace of mind could only be obtained by making the purchase of it. Whether they would wear it more than once or twice or at all mattered not—the hat was theirs and that is what counted. A new hat too can lift a woman out of the depths of despondency and can completely reconstruct her whole mental attitude. Just as a sip of rare old wine cheers the spirits and warms the cockles of the heart, so a new hat helps a woman to forget her

worries and disappointments and even dissipates the dark clouds of despair. Cases have been known where a new hat has conquered jealousy in a woman, so stimulating her vanity and satisfying her pride that she found it possible to be most sweet and gentle toward her competitor and arch-enemy. We cannot therefore make fun of a woman's hat or laugh at it as a bit of feminine whimsey; we must treat it with reverence and respect, for it is somehow linked with her very personality.

A woman's hat can play an important part in the ebb and flow of events in her daily life. Take for instance the important and complicated matter of dressing either for work, or for a shopping tour or for a visit, a meeting or a party. The first problem that must be solved is: Which hat shall I wear? Upon the answer to that question depends the whole selection of wardrobe. If the hat is new, then the dress, shoes, purse and gloves must be new too; if the hat is of the informal type, as for instance, a calot with a feather in it, then the dress can be informal or of a sport vogue or perhaps something that has seen some wear. If perhaps the creation chosen is a chic, dressy model with a veil or a maze of ribbons, then the dress must be more formal and elegant. As a practical head-piece the turban is most popular. It can be worn with almost any style of dress or suit. Turbans are usually light and compact, fit closely to the head, preserve the contour of the hair-do and seem dressy and dignified. They are always intriguing because they create a bit of oriental atmosphere and if milady has to make a hurried selection and dress quickly, the turban will get the call over every other piece in the hat box. It must be noted too that a hat is the first consideration of a woman when preparing for a new and thrilling experience. If she has been invited to a party or a convention she must first get a new hat; if she is going to make a trip or meet some new and important people, she must have a new hat. The hat's the thing—around it revolves a woman's world.

A PRACTICAL consideration of women's hats brings forth the question: Why do women wear hats in church? Perhaps this question is of more interest to the priest than the layman, for when a priest preaches to his congregation especially at Christmas or Easter time when new outfits are in evidence, he is not only distracted but even mystified by the many and different kinds of hats he sees before him. Sometimes he wonders whether St. Paul had all this in mind when

he said that women's heads should be covered in church. In his day the veil was the usual covering of a woman's head, and it is usually understood that the reason behind the rule was to prevent distractions that might arise from the sight of the beauty of a woman's hair. In view of this fact, the snood, the bandana and the babushka are entirely in place and when worn by women in church conform more to Catholic custom than a hat ever could. In European countries, it is still customary for women to wear veils or shawls in church; how the transfer from a veil or shawl to a hat was made will never be known. The Canon law of the Church prescribes only that a woman's head must be covered when she is in church; it does not distinguish between hats and shawls.

ANOTHER difficulty with women's hats arises when they approach the altar rail to receive Holy Communion. Many a priest has been stabbed by a long pointed feather pyramiding out of the top of the bonnet, when after placing the Sacred Host on a woman's tongue, she bows her head in reverence thereby swinging that part of her head gear into his path. Large brimmed hats set straight on the head, especially the 'cartwheels' worn in summer, provide a problem for the priest. If the wearer does not raise her head, then the priest must bend down and look under the wide brim to find the tongue of the communicant; if she does keep her head back, then he must quickly move away lest when she bows her head the brim of her hat strike the ciborium in his hand. Veils too are a hazard. When the veil of the hat fits down closely over the face it is invisible to the wearer; at communion time she is liable to forget the veil making it necessary for the priest either to ask her to remove it or to try to lift it himself in order to place the Sacred Particle on her tongue.

A growing modern tendency to 'hatlessness' has caused the milliners of the country quite a bit of worry, so much so that they have begun a campaign of advertising to combat it. We read such captions as 'Let your hats lift your spirits — sky high!' 'Your hat should make the most of you' — 'Wear hats he'll remember you by.' Their dogma is that a woman without a hat is a woman without individuality; they censure hatlessness as an attempt to become attractive by being conspicuous; their battle cry is that a hat is the most definite evidence in the fashion world of individuality, completeness and soundness. How much of this

is inspired by the profit motive and how much by concern for the development of feminine personality we do not know.

CONCLUDING these comments about women's hats, it might be well to caution men against the imprudence of poking fun at a lady's head dress, extreme and ludicrous though it may be. To a woman, a hat is a sacred thing; it is part of her personal beauty and charm; no matter how odd it may be, she is proud of it. A compliment, a word of admiration, even an admission that her hat is different from all other hats will elicit from any woman a bit of appreciation and gratitude and will help to bring out those glowing qualities that make women the real rulers of the world.

—Why Priests Don't Marry—

It would be hard to find a better statement of the argument for the celibacy of the clergy than the following remarks of a poor Indian, quoted in the Life of Bishop Baraga:

"Our forefathers had men with black-robos as leaders. They had neither wives nor children. They devoted themselves entirely to prayer and to the service of the red men. When these men ate, they were satisfied, for they had but one mouth to fill, and when one of them died, he did not need anything more, for he had all he needed in heaven, and when we buried him we had only to pray for his spirit. Now they give us men like ourselves as chiefs of prayer. These men have women, and they love them. They have children, and they love them. The women and children have many mouths and many backs. The poor man of prayer fears that these mouths will not all be filled and these backs will not all be clothed. He fears very much to die, for then those he loves will suffer hunger, if we do not support them. As long as he lives he takes care of his wife and children and when he does this he says to the redskin: 'I do my duty.' And the redskin thinks what his father said that the Black-robe was a man not like one of us, and that he loved the redskin very much because he had but the Great Spirit and his people to love. He had no wife and child. He had but one mouth and one back, and when he died this mouth was shut and this back cold, and he feared not when the time came to die, and he looked only on the redskin, whom he loved."



Wonderful must he be who can afford to do without friends and without love. More wonderful assuredly than God Himself.

— *Aelred of Rievaulx.*

On Unemployment

1. Nature and Extent:

Unemployment may almost be taken to be a characteristic of our economic society, regardless of whether one considers what are called periods of prosperity or periods of depression. It is defined as involuntary idleness on the part of those who have lost their latest jobs and are able to work and are looking for work. According to unofficial and official estimates, even in 1929 the unemployed in this sense were close to 2,000,000. In 1933 the number rose to 15,000,000. In 1939 there were still more than 9,000,000 unemployed in the nation. The most hopeful estimates do not expect the number to be cut by more than half even by the highly geared defense program.

2. The Cause:

Many causes of unemployment have been advanced by economists, but the most essential seems to be *bad distribution* of the products of industry. The actual present distribution gives to one-third of the income-receivers of the country more than they can spend for goods of any sort, and to the other two-thirds less than they could and would spend if they had the money. The result is that too much money is saved (by the first group mentioned above, which receives interest, rent and profits from business) and too little is spent to keep the industrial plant busy producing. Figures prove this bad distribution: During the 1935-36 period, one-third of the total population of the country, i.e., about 13,000,000 families, had an average income of only \$471.00. The middle group averaged \$1,076.00. The top third averaged \$3,000.00, and in that third were incomes as high as \$1,000,000. (It is estimated that the lower two-thirds would have spent at least up to \$1,500 for consumer goods if they had the money, which would have kept every industrial plant busy and idle men working.)

3. Remedies:

- a) Lower prices — so that lower income groups could purchase more products of industry and thus keep industry producing.
- b) Higher wages, attained through proper union activity and through legally established minimum wages and maximum hours, so that the lower income groups would have more money with which to buy the products of industry.
- c) Lower interest rates on investment, so that less money would be held in savings, which always reduce the markets for industrial and farm production.

EXAMEN FOR LAYMEN (XII)

This examen, on pride and humility, is the last of the series of twelve examinations of conscience for laymen published through 1941. We hope to reproduce them in booklet form in the near future.

F. A. RYAN

PRIDE is defined as an inordinate love of one's own excellence. It is called an inordinate love because everyone is bound to love self in an ordinate or rational way, which means to love self inasmuch as and after the manner in which one is loved by God. God loves every human being that He has created; this means that God desires the happiness and salvation of each one and directs all His laws and all His providence and all His gifts and graces to these ends. A rightful love of self is really reducible to the love of God, because it means seeking what God seeks, conforming self to God's will, fulfilling God's plans in regard to one's destiny.

An inordinate love of self or of one's excellence means setting oneself against God and above God. For example, it means attributing to one's own judgment a higher value than to the judgment of God. It means thinking that one can find and follow a better road to happiness than that made known by the all-wise God. It means rebelling against God because it is assumed that God does not know what is best for one's body and soul.

It stands to reason, therefore, that pride is in some way responsible for every deliberate sin that is ever committed. If a person sins through lust or indulgence in forbidden sense pleasure, it is fundamentally because he believes he can find some happiness in that whereas by keeping God's law happiness could not be attained. If a person sins through malice, i.e., by deliberately breaking a law like that of hearing Mass on Sunday, it is radically because he thinks that God made a useless law. If he sins through fear of poverty or pain, then it is because he will not admit that God can take care of those who keep his law. So with every kind of sin: in some way it signifies pride, assuming that the sinner knows more than God or can do more than God or can find greater happiness in rebellion against God than by remaining subject to His authority and by keeping His law.

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For this reason it is difficult to enumerate mortal and venial sins that are sins of pride alone. Pride usually reveals itself in the breaking of some specific law that God has made. However, in order to trace the influence of pride in our lives, it is well to examine our minds for the motives of various sins, because it will quickly be found that pride is a major factor in all. Thus sins already contained in previous examinations of this series will be repeated here, with special reference to the form of pride that causes them. The list will not be exhaustive but representative of how pride works.

Of course the only remedy for pride is humility. Humility is the fundamental virtue by which a person remembers his utter dependence on God and God's laws and God's providence, and the utter folly of any action or any judgment or any self-glorification that is contrary to the will of God.

I. MORTAL SINS

1. Have I considered myself capable of reading forbidden books without permission — books dealing with things contrary to my faith or destructive of morals — because I thought my judgment about these things was better than that of God and His Church which forbids such reading?

2. Have I decided that it could do me no harm to attend non-Catholic services even though God's law and the law of His Church forbid it?

3. Have I made light of or even ridiculed certain doctrines or laws of the Catholic religion, as if I knew more than Christ or His Church?

4. Have I, with but a shallow and mediocre training in religious teaching, presumed to make snap judgments about doctrines I hardly even understood?

5. Have I shown my independence of God by missing Mass on Sunday without a reason, by eating meat on Friday, refusing to fast on days appointed?

6. Have I practically expressed the conviction that I know more than God and His Church by refusing to send my children to a Catholic school or by saying that I do not believe a Catholic education is necessary for a Catholic child?

7. Have I drawn others into sins of impurity on the ground that God's law in this matter is old-fashioned, impossible, unimportant, or harmful?

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8. Have I practiced any form of preventing conception in marriage because I maintained that God's law could not be kept, or if kept, would result in too much hardship?

9. Have I refused to forgive someone who wronged me because I considered my honor a more valuable thing than God's who forgave His enemies and commanded me to forgive mine?

10. Have I slandered others because I thought revenge against them was necessary for my honor even though it is forbidden by God?

11. Have I used unjust methods in business because I deemed it more important for me to make money and "to get ahead" than to be obedient to God?

12. Have I used sinful means to attain social or political power because I would rather be above my fellow-human beings than subject to God?

13. Have I rebelled against superiors and the serious commands they gave because I thought my knowledge and dignity freed me from the necessity of obedience?

14. Have I failed to confess certain mortal sins I had committed because I said they were "my own affair," that "they were no business of the priest," that "I could get along without God's forgiveness"?

15. Have I maintained, either in word or action, that prayer is unnecessary for a man?

II. VENIAL SINS

1. Have I been guilty of the form of pride called vanity, by considering myself more intelligent, more learned, more handsome, even more charitable than others?

2. Have I bragged about my accomplishments, my virtues, my abilities?

3. Have I given in to anger against others because I thought myself better than they were, and that they should know better than to cross me?

4. Have I shown my pride in the form of sensitiveness, resentment, pouting, peevishness?

5. Have I talked about the faults of others, as if to say: "I have no faults at all"?

6. Have I complained about God's providence in permitting me certain trials, as if I were deserving of better treatment from Him?

7. Have I looked down on others who were less wealthy, less

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cultured, less learned, less prominent, less gifted than I?

8. Have I been too proud to take second place in any work or activity, withdrawing from it or hindering it because I could not be first?

9. Have I shown my pride in constant disobedience to my superiors in small things, or by stubbornness and disrespectful language to those who had a right to command me?

10. Have I neglected daily prayer as if I were strong enough and good enough to get along without God's help?

III. HELPS AND COUNSELS

1. Have I realized that humility is the foundation of all other virtues because it keeps me mindful of my complete dependence on God and the need I have of perfectly accomplishing and accepting His will?

2. Have I learned to detest pride as the cause of all sin, the reason for the creation of hell, and the source of all the evil in the world?

3. Have I a consciousness of the just deserts of my sins — so that I am ready to accept any trial or hardship from God to atone for those sins?

4. Am I convinced of how foolish it would be to set up my judgment and my little knowledge against the teachings of Christ and of His Church, and against God's knowledge of the past, present and future?

5. Do I meditate often on the humility of Christ, who emptied Himself of all honor and became a servant to show me what I must be in the eyes of God?

6. Have I adopted this as one of my favorite prayers: "O Jesus meek and humble of heart, make my heart like unto thine"?

Epitaph Department

Here lies father and mother and sister and I
We all died within the space of one short year;
They all be buried at Wimble except I,
And I be buried here.

— Nettlebed Churchyard, Oxfordshire.



Here lies the body of John Mound
Lost at sea and never found.



Here lies the body of Sternhold Oakes
Who lived and died like other folks.

OPEN LETTER TO A. J. CRONIN

Written upon reading his article in *Life*, October 20, 1941, in which he defends his book "Keys of the Kingdom."

Dear Doctor Cronin:

You are quite right — life does not present us with clean-cut black and white characters; and I seriously doubt if any priest of experience thinks it does. His work in the confessional gives him a more intimate view of humanity than even a doctor or a novelist. Remember the simple rhyme: "There is so much good in the worst of us and so much bad in the best of us, that it behooves none of us to talk about the rest of us?" I like that chummy note of tolerance, with its implicit condemnation of any "juster than thou" attitude.

I like "Keys of the Kingdom." I like it immensely. You have a genius for character analysis. With a few deft strokes of your verbal brush, you make the reader feel that he has known the person described for many years. Your contrasts are so naturally suggested, that the reader quite readily loves, and hates, pities and condemns. No one, I think, can reach the end of "The Keys of the Kingdom" without a real admiration and warm sympathy for old Chisholm. God has given you a great gift; I wonder if He intended you to use it to draw attention to the human weaknesses of His Church?

Of a certainty those weaknesses and shortcomings do exist. There are unfortunately many Mealys in high ecclesiastical positions. You and I understand very clearly that this fact does not militate against the Divinity of the Church; nay, it is rather an evidence of that Divine Power which keeps the Church untainted in its dogmatic and moral teaching, in spite of the failure and sins of many who hold positions of authority in that Church. But I wonder if you really think that the ordinary person of meagre education is capable of making such a nice distinction? I wonder if your splendidly written novel will not weaken his respect for authority; perhaps even for the clear teaching of the Church of Christ?

I quite understand your inner rebellion at the spectacle of saints made so exaggeratedly perfect, as to appear quite inhuman. Some one has said that "most biographies of the saints seem to be a conspiracy to conceal the truth." There is much to that point of view. But even at

that, the lives of such saints as Francis of Assisi, of Francis de Sales, of Philip Neri (to mention but a few) surely give evidence of real sanctity without any weakening of the bonds of human sympathy.

I think I hate hypocrisy and sham just as much as you do. Certainly I've fought against them all my life. And I am in a position to know a great deal more about such matters than you. Yet I am quite sure I would never be tempted to draw attention to evidences of such things existing in the Church, and present the unlovely picture to the general public. My love of the Church which Christ founded would prevent that, even were I gifted to write as powerfully and as beautifully as you, — perhaps I should say, — especially if I were so gifted.

But I have a more specific criticism of certain passages in your book, which deal with definite dogmatic and moral teaching. I suggest that you consult some dogmatician as to the possibility of a sincere atheist being saved, or even as to the possibility of there being a sincere atheist. Also, I believe that the statement that, while the Church is a loving mother, there "may be other mothers," would require a great deal of interpreting if one would not have it fall into the heresy of religious indifferentism. And lastly, if Chisholm could really never believe that "one of God's children would sizzle in hell for all eternity for eating a mutton chop on Friday" he is setting himself clearly contrary to the definite teaching of theology. I suggest you read some treatise "On Laws" in Moral Theology.

I smiled broadly at the wire from the "sporty Padre" in Florida who complimented you. The wire would have impressed me more had it come from an "apostolic Padre." True, St. Peter was a fisherman, but I seriously doubt if he could be termed a sporty apostle on that account. Sporty Padres, who at times are taken to task by their superiors, are very apt to applaud any species of subtle rebellion against ecclesiastical authority. Nor does the Almighty have the least difficulty in recognizing the difference between a bishop and a bricklayer, even looking from an aeroplane. The episcopal character is a shining, significant, sacred thing, even though the particular bishop may not be a credit to the high dignity to which God has called him. I would think any Catholic novelist could distinguish him from a bricklayer.

Sincerely yours,

A. F. Browne, C.Ss.R.

THE BOY-HERO: VAN

The follow-up of a popular pamphlet biography, which has been an inspiration for boys in many parts of the world.

J. R. KESSLER

SOME three years ago a pamphlet was put out by the publishers of THE LIGUORIAN entitled *Van: Beloved of God and Man*. It was the story of a boy who died a saintly death during the novitiate in which he was preparing to become a Redemptorist missionary. The pamphlet achieved so wide a sale and aroused so much interest that many have asked to know how "Van" has fared during the ensuing years.

When Van died in St. Louis on May 16, 1936, there was an immediate and enthusiastic wave of admiration for the American boy who had said on his deathbed; "This is the happiest day of my life." The admiration in many cases took the form of active devotion, and prayers were addressed to him for spiritual and temporal favors, — prayers which in some striking instances were claimed to have been heard. Anecdotes and impressions of Van as a school boy, as a student for the priesthood, as a novice; Van in the classroom, on the ball field; Van even in a fist fight, were related, written down, assembled, checked, revised, and finally put into connected form. This was submitted to those who had known him best, his boyhood companions, and under their keen criticisms was twice completely re-written; and finally in November, 1938, it was published under the title: "Van: Beloved of God and Men."

The reception given it was again one of enthusiastic admiration. Despite the fact that it did not have the advantage of being published by a national distributing agency for pamphlets, with the publicity which this would mean, the "fans of Van" seem to have passed the word along from person to person practically all over the country.

Indeed, requests have come for copies of the pamphlet from every corner of the United States and Canada, and from Ireland, England, Wales, South Africa, Australia, Alaska and China. One even came from a sailor aboard a United States warship in the Pacific.

The result has been that in the three years since its publication, the pamphlet has gone through five printings, and a sixth is now in preparation.

Summaries of the pamphlet were published in various magazines in the United States and Canada, and also in Ireland and Australia; even in Rome a summary was published in Latin. And within recent months the entire pamphlet has been translated into Chinese in China.

It has been used for public spiritual reading in many novitiates and colleges for men and women; teaching Sisters have frequently used it in the classroom; directors of boys' camps have introduced it to their youthful charges. According to various reports, it has been the means of awakening a priestly or religious vocation in the hearts of not a few boys and girls.

PARTICULARLY remarkable was the effect Van had on a Protestant boy in Oklahoma. Somehow or other this lad got hold of a pamphlet and read it; and after that, though his family was a strict Protestant one, nothing would do but he must be like Van — must even study to be a priest like Van. The details of what went on at his home are not known; but what is known is that one day he knocked at the door of St. Joseph's College, Kirkwood, Missouri, and asked the Father Superior if that was the place where Van had studied to be a priest. Answered that it was the place, he said that he had come to do the same. He had run away from home, hitch-hiked his way all the distance from central Oklahoma to Kirkwood, near St. Louis, and had found his way to the college. Of course the Superior could only notify his family and send him back home; he was then safely placed by them in a Protestant institution for boys.

Any reader of the pamphlet who has felt inspired by the charm of Van's example may be glad to know that many other readers have felt the same. Admiration that "such a life is possible in these modern times," and help in doing the little things of daily life more generously seem to be the common experience of very many who get to know this modern American boy.

Many answers to prayer are also cited by those who have come to believe in the power of his intercession. They range from reports of recovery from serious and fatal illnesses to jubilant acknowledgment of help in lesser matters, and reach well into the hundreds.

One such seeming answer to prayer may be cited here. A young man was brought to the hospital in New Hampton, Iowa, suffering from streptococcus viridans — a form of streptococcic infection that is usually

fatal. A day or two after his admission to the hospital, in fact, his condition was judged so serious that he was given the last Sacraments. He soon became wildly delirious, and grew steadily worse for a week. Then a novena to Van was begun; and on the third day of the novena, his temperature returned to normal, and — what the Doctor considered most remarkable — remained normal without even the usual fluctuations after an illness of this kind. The young man had in some inexplicable way been cured.

THE interest in Van that has thus arisen since his death has been in the main, however, almost a private affair; a thing carried on as it were beneath the surface of public life by enthusiastic private individuals in various parts of the country and of the world. But Van's friends may and do hope and pray that in God's good time these centers of private love and devotion will burst out into the open; that the good Lord will give the impulse, which only He can give by His almighty power, that will carry Van on to become publicly recognized, — a real American boy raised to the glory of being a real American Saint.

To those who have not read the pamphlet and become acquainted with Van we recommend it as an inspiration and a delight. It is called: "Van: Beloved of God and Men," and may be had from The Pamphlet Office, Box 148, Oconomowoc, Wisconsin, for ten cents a copy or one dollar a dozen.

Purging the Chickens

Three managers of chicken farms in Russia, so the story goes, were being questioned by an investigator. "What do you feed your chickens?" he asked the first.

"Corn."

"You're under arrest! We use corn to feed people."

The second heard this conversation and tried to play safe.

"What do you feed your chickens?" the question came.

"Corn husks."

"You're under arrest! We use corn husks to make cloth. And you?" he asked, turning to the third man.

"I give my chickens the money and tell them to go buy their own food."

Side Glances

by The Bystander

It was amusing to read, in that very interesting best-seller entitled "One Foot in Heaven," which is the story of a Protestant minister's enthusiastic work for souls, how the hero of the book happened to become a minister. "Happened" is a good word, because there does not seem to have been much planning or preparation. The young man, in the midst of his studies to become a doctor, heard a glowing sermon preached by a Methodist bishop in the city of Montreal. The sermon "converted" him, and when the call was issued for converts to profess publicly their change of heart, "our hero" went forward. He did more than profess conversion; he told the good bishop that the sermon had convinced him that he should give up medicine and enter the ministry. The bishop was delighted and began to make immediate preparations for the young man's ordination. The latter, however, objected that he needed some study and preparation. The objection was brushed aside. "You have enough knowledge now," he said in effect. "There is a parish in Kansas that needs a pastor. Start right in and you can pick up a little pastoral theology as you go along."



Perhaps the incident provides as clear an illustration of the gulf between much of the Protestant clergy and the Catholic priesthood, even from a human and natural viewpoint, as could be found. How can there possibly be unity of doctrine and continuity of teaching among those who are willing to lift a man out of the study of medicine and drop him cold into a pulpit to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ? The theory, of course, is that good will, enthusiasm, powers of leadership and a smattering of knowledge of the Bible are sufficient preparation for leading souls to heaven. Is it strange that some ministers are so easily taken in by calumnious and defamatory views of the Catholic Church, or incapable of rising above the anti-Catholic canards that they heard frequently in their childhood? Can it be that in the welter of conflicting opinions in the world as to who Christ was and what He taught and how much must be believed and what must be done to be saved, a man can become qualified to speak with authority and finality just because he has good will? or even if he have a few years of cursory study such as the average minister can boast?



Consider the preparation a man must make to become a Catholic priest. The absolutely minimum course is 12 years, and the law of the Church is that even with that a man may not ordinarily be ordained a priest until he is 24 years of age. Even those 12 years seem short to one who recognizes the vast field of knowledge one should cover before daring to speak with authority to others about God and their souls. One who wants to tell people the right road to heaven must also be able to tell them why other roads are wrong. A thousand wrong roads have been devised by men with influence over others in the course of history.

THE LIGUORIAN

Thousands of people are walking the wrong roads, who will not be led to the right one unless someone can tell them and prove to them why they are on the wrong. So the would-be priest has to study all the wrong roads as well as the right one; he has to delve into every age of history, into every brand of religion ever conceived, into every imitation of Christ that has ever appeared, before he may receive a commission to stand in a pulpit and say to people: This you must do and this you must believe to be saved! The end is so great and so important that 12 years are not too long a time to qualify a man to speak with authority — with an actual knowledge of what Christ taught and commanded all who would be His followers.



It all comes back to the simple fact that for the Catholic, religion is a matter of science as well as good will and belief: that God expects men to use their minds to learn why and what they are to believe and to use them with the same kind of logic and industry they use to learn medicine, law, business procedure and any other form of human activity. Most Protestants, on the other hand, consider religion something that does not require and does not even suffer analysis in scientific terms. No true scientist would admit that good will is sufficient to make one an authority on aero-dynamics, or on the Mendelian Law, or on the constitution of the atom. But Protestants assume that good will is enough to make one a scientific teacher of religion. No true scientist would assume that it does not matter whether his fellow scientists agree with him on fundamental principles of science. Yet Protestant ministers, sometimes of the same sect, agree to disagree on just as fundamental things, such as divorce, birth-prevention, the necessity of faith, and the nature of prayer. We submit it to the judgment of any thinking man whether this can be God's way of dealing with a creature to whom He gave an intelligence like to His own.



It is not easy to become a Catholic priest. Not only must a man have the capacity for scientific knowledge of religion true and false, but he must demonstrate over the 12-year period of his training that he can dedicate his life to the teaching of truth — that he can, as it were, marry truth and have no other spouse. That is why, on an average, only one out of three candidates who present themselves for the course of study leading to the priesthood, makes the grade. Some drop out of their own accord, preferring the easier path of being a follower to the exacting one of being a leader to others. Others are dropped by those who are in charge of the training schools, either because they are not intelligently equipped to acquire the knowledge necessary, or because their health will not bear the strain of so intense an intellectual life, or because they lack qualification for the sacrifice so necessary in a priest. If religion is a science, if it has any relationship to the human mind at all, then it would seem that, even from a natural and logical viewpoint, the one whose mind has been best trained to speak authoritatively to others concerning it should be the Catholic priest.

Catholic Anecdotes

THE FLAME OF FAITH

DURING the savage persecution of the Church under Calles in Mexico in 1926, a young husband and father, Anacleto Gonzales Flores, was arrested on a trumped up charge or no charge at all in the city of Guadalajara.

He was intelligent, well-educated, happily married, prominent in the life of the city, and universally beloved; but above all he was a sterling and active Catholic. It was this last thing — his active Catholic leadership — which led to his arrest; for the local ex-brigands in political power considered him the main obstacle in the way of success for their persecution of the Church. Once under arrest he was savagely tortured and finally done to death.

The body was brought home. His young widow took the oldest of her children — a boy about six — by the hand, and led him to the coffin of his father.

"Look," she said, "this is your father. He died for the faith. Put your hand on his body here and promise me that when you grow up, you will do the same, if God so wills."

CHECKING CHARITY

THAT the severity of holy people can never conquer the demands of charity is well exemplified in the following delightful anecdote of the saintly Bishop Baraga.

The Bishop had been visiting Father Terhorst at a little Indian settlement, and one day an Indian came to see him. In the course of the conversation, the Indian remarked that the trouble with the Indians was this: the Bishop had been entirely too kind to them; he had given them too much, and had consequently spoiled them.

When the Indian had gone, the bishop, who had a very sensitive soul, said to Father Terhorst with great emotion:

"Did you hear what he said? I have done everything for them, and now they tell me that I have spoiled them!" Then assuming an air of authority he said: "Don't you give them anything any more!"

"But, Your Grace, sometimes it is almost impossible to refuse; they may be in great need of help."

"No matter," said the bishop. "We must be strict." Just at that moment a poor Indian woman was admitted, and Father Terhorst withdrew from the room. A few moments later the bishop sought him out, and said, rather shamefacedly:

"Father, can you lend me three dollars to give to that poor woman. I will return the money."

Father Terhorst gave the desired amount to his bishop, but he could not help remarking:

"You see, Bishop, it is not always such an easy matter to refuse an alms."

FAIR EXCHANGE

ST. LOUIS, King of France, was undoubtedly a model husband, but he had a way of meeting the arguments of his wife when they concerned some matter in which he felt himself unable to yield.

Queen Marguerite once expressed to him her vexation at his simple way of dressing and his lack of royal dignity.

"Madame," he asked, "would you be pleased if I covered myself with costly garments?"

"I certainly would," she replied, "and I want you to do so."

"Well, I agree," said the king, "and am ready to please you, for the law of marriage requires that the husband should seek to please the wife. Only this obligation is reciprocal; you will therefore be obliged to conform to my wish."

"And what is that wish?"

"It is that you will henceforth dress in an humble and unadorned costume. You will take mine, and I yours."

But the queen would not hear of such an exchange, and without any further words she curtsied and left the room.

Pointed Paragraphs

The Immaculate Conception

The editorials in a Catholic magazine must be so much Greek to editors of non-Catholic magazines. Has there ever been an editorial in the Saturday Evening Post or Harpers on the Immaculate Conception? No. What would the managing editor say if one were to have the bravery to send in a nicely written essay or editorial on the Immaculate Conception? Well, he would scratch his head as he read on, and to himself comment, "What's all this? I never heard of such a thing." Then he would put the manuscript in the return envelope which the sendee, having foresight, enclosed, and returned it to its owner by the next mail. After that he would turn to his desk and dash off a brilliant essay (or editorial) on the state of our army making maneuvers in Louisiana. To him that would be so much more important.

Whether highly-paid editors sitting in highly-respectable editorial chairs believe it or not, the Immaculate Conception is a fact; and a fact of much greater significance than the state of our army in Louisiana. The Immaculate Conception is a miracle. It means that the Virgin Mary, of all the creatures born to earth, was the only one who was exempt from our common heritage, Original Sin. And in her exemption weak and sinful man finds a firm foundation on which to build his devotion to this extraordinary woman. If God loved her so much those many years ago as to privilege her so highly, He must still love her in Heaven. And loving her, He must listen to her requests when she petitions Him for us, her children.

The 8th of December is the feast of the Immaculate Conception. We are not going to worry about the ignorance and sophistication of pontifical magazine editors. We are going to accept a fact, and reconsecrate ourselves to Mary on the great day of her feast. She will bless us for it.

Christmas - 1941

Christmas has two meanings — one for the poor and the other for the rich.

For the rich the birthday of Our Lord means the opportunity of giving to members of the family elaborate and expensive gifts. This is fine, and no one should cavil with it. However, there seems to be a law of the universe that prescribes that only such love and such charity are valid as are based on sacrifice. But the rich do not have to make any sacrifice when they dispense their gifts to those they love. What then is the state of their love and the value of their charity?

Perhaps it would be well for the rich to make a pilgrimage to the stable at Bethlehem. There they will find supreme love and charity — and supreme sacrifice too. There they will find a God who was a millionaire a thousand times over, and who gave up not one tenth of His possessions for those He loved, but practically all of His possessions. "The birds of the air had their nests and the foxes their holes; but the Son of Man had no place to lay His head." Just a short visit, but a *real* visit to the crib will show a man how selfish it is to retain a million dollars for himself even though at Christmas time he fills his home with toys and trinkets and scatters turkeys around the slums like a sower sowing seed.

For the poor the birthday of Our Lord means the answer to all the inexplicable things of their life. Why should they accept their poverty (when economic conditions and industrial dictators prevent them from securing even the frugal luxuries to which they have a right) and not lose their faith on account of it? Well, the Infant Christ was poor, and He didn't complain. Better to be like Christ than like a thousand Croesuses.

Practically, Christmas means more to the poor than to the rich.

Holy Innocents

An article in the *American* is most apropos for the December issue. This article tells of a mother out in California who had something like fifteen children, and who gloried in the fact. The "glorying" was so unique that the news had to be spread over the whole country so that all might see and be amazed.

The article is apropos for the December issue because it is in

December that the Church celebrates the feast of the Holy Innocents. These "holy innocents" were children killed by the dictator Herod in an effort to catch up with the Infant Jesus Who, somebody had told him, intended to steal his throne from him.

For close to two thousand years these little children have been remembered each year by the Church. They rest on her altars; they command a holy Mass; they live and laugh and play as they did before the cruel sword of the king cut them down.

However, it is not only due to the fact that they are martyrs that the Church holds them warm in her memory. She loves them and year after year places them before her followers because *they are children*. The Church loves children, little children, as Christ loved little children when He was on the earth.

It is too bad that those who have the right to have little children do not want them. It is too bad that they think that poverty is too great a price or that pain is too much to pay for the priceless possession of little children—lots of little children so that they fill the house and the yard and every available bed, and filling them do not let Christ escape, for where little children are, there is Christ too.

Perhaps the article in the *American* will help. It *will* help. But viewing life and marriage and eternity with the eyes of the Church will help much more.

"Popular" Music

We have no competence or desire to set ourselves up as authorities in musical matters, or venture into a discussion of what constitutes good music, but we must admit to having taken great satisfaction out of something we came across the other day in one of the magazines. It was a list of the 10 most popular musical victrola records in 1940 on the basis we suppose, of their sale. The list was as follows:

Prokofieff, *Peter and the Wolf*; Beethoven, *Fifth Symphony*; Bach, *Toccata and Fugue in D Minor*; Wagner album of Flagstad and Melchior; Strauss, *The Blue Danube Waltz*; Dvorak, *New World Symphony*; Gershwin, *Rhapsody in Blue*; Tchaikovsky, *Nutcracker Suite*; Ravel, *Bolero*.

It gave us satisfaction, this list did, because it bolstered up some modest opinions of ours which we had almost been afraid to express. We had imagined that anyone who said he preferred Beethoven to

Benny Goodman would promptly be labelled as old-fashioned and eccentric, and anyone who claimed to get more enjoyment out of a waltz than out of a rumba must surely be making a vain effort to swim against the current of popular thought.

We had imagined all this until we came across the above list. What a surprise! Not a single swing band represented! No mention of *Beat me, Daddy, eight to the bar!* It just goes to show that the popular thought is not always accurately represented by those who make the most noise.

Hereafter we shall with boldness dial our radio to the Symphonic Hour. There will be no more furtive glances around lest some fresh young modern cast ridicule upon us for our old-fashioned ways. And if any remarks are made, we will promptly produce our list of the ten most popular records of 1940.

The Passions of War

The following account gives a sad picture of the difficulties experienced by Pope Pius XII in these troublous times. It comes from Count Vladimir d'Ormesson, who was French Ambassador to the Vatican at the outbreak of the war between the Allies and Germany, and returned to France after Italy had declared war. Here is the statement of Count d'Ormesson as recorded in the *London Tablet*:

"When M. Reynaud sent me to the Vatican, he charged me with the special mission of trying to keep Italy out of the war. But when I arrived in Rome, I soon discovered that I was too late. . . .

"The day Italy declared war on France, Mussolini sent orders to all the clergy in Rome to ring their church bells in sign of joy, and to celebrate the occasion. When the Pope heard of this, he immediately countermanded the order, and informed Mussolini of what he had done, explaining at the same time that such orders, according to the Lateran Pact, should come from the head of the Church, and not from the head of the state. Mussolini yielded, but he had his revenge. A few days later the Pope had to leave the Vatican to celebrate Mass in one of the Roman Basilicas. Suddenly the Pope's car was stopped in the traffic at a crossing, when there rushed from all sides crowds of young Fascists, who made for the Pope with cries of 'Down with the Pope! Death to the Pope!' His Holiness was so dismayed by this public manifestation of hatred, that audiences had to be suspended for several weeks to give him time for rest and recovery."

—♦— L I G U O R I A N A —♦—

EXCERPTS FROM THE WRITINGS OF ST. ALPHONSUS

**"TO THEE DO WE CRY, POOR BAN-
ISHED CHILDREN OF EVE"**

POWER IN TEMPTATION

Not only is the most Blessed Virgin Queen of heaven and all saints, but she is also Queen of hell and of all evil

**From:
The Glories
of Mary**

spirits; for she overcame them valiantly by her virtues. From the very beginning God foretold the victory and the empire that our Queen would one day obtain over the serpent, when He announced that a woman should come into the world to conquer him: *I will put enmities between thee and the woman — she shall crush thy head.*

Who could this woman, his enemy, be but Mary, who by her fair humility and holy life always conquered him and beat down his strength? The Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ was promised in the person of that woman, as it is remarked by St. Cyprian, and after him another ancient writer; and therefore God did not say, "I place," but "I will place," lest he might seem to refer to Eve: meaning that God said, *I will place enmities between thee and the woman*, to signify that the serpent's opponent was not to be Eve, who was then living, but would be another woman descending from her, and who, as St. Vincent Ferrer observes, "would bring our first parents far greater advantages than those which they had lost by their sin." Mary, then, was

this great and valiant woman, who conquered the devil and crushed his head by bringing down his pride, as it was foretold by God Himself: *She shall crush thy head.* Some doubt as to whether these words refer to Mary, or whether they do not rather refer to Jesus Christ; for the Septuagint renders them, *He shall crush thy head.* But in the Vulgate which alone was approved by the sacred Council of Trent, we find *She* and not *He*; and thus it was understood by St. Ambrose, St. Jerome, St. Augustine and a great many others. However be it as it may, it is certain that either the Son by means of the Mother, or the Mother by means of the Son has overcome Lucifer; so that, as St. Bernard remarks, this proud spirit, in spite of himself, was beaten down and trampled under foot by this most Blessed Virgin; so that as a slave conquered in war, he is forced always to obey the commands of this Queen. "Beaten down and trampled under the feet of Mary, he endured a wretched slavery." St. Bruno says "that Eve was the cause of death," by allowing herself to be overcome by the serpent, "but that Mary," by conquering the devil, "restored life to us." And she bound him in such a way that this enemy can not stir so as to do the least injury to any of her clients.

Beautiful is the explanation given by Richard of St. Laurence of the following words of the

Book of Proverbs: *The heart of her husband trusteth in her, and he shall have no need of spoils.* He says, applying them to Jesus and Mary: "The heart of her spouse, that is Christ, trusteth in her, and he shall have no need of spoils; for she endows him with all those whom by her prayers, merits and example, she snatches from the devil." "God has entrusted the heart of Jesus to the hands of Mary, that she may insure it the love of men," says Cornelius a Lapide; and thus he will not need spoils; that is, he will be abundantly supplied with souls; for she enriches him with those she has snatched from hell, and saved from the devil by her powerful assistance.

O how the infernal spirits tremble at the very thought of Mary, and at her august name! says St. Bonaventure. "O, how fearful is Mary to the devils!" The saint compares these enemies to those of whom Job speaks: *He diggeth through houses in the dark: if the morning suddenly appear, it is to them the shadow of death.* Thieves go and rob houses in the dark; but as soon as the morning dawns, they fly, as if they beheld the shadow of death. "Precisely thus," in the words of the same saint, "do the devils enter a soul in the time of darkness;" meaning when the soul is in the obscurity of ignorance. They dig through the house of our mind when it is in the darkness of ignorance. But then, he adds, "if suddenly they

are overtaken by the dawn, that is, if the grace and mercy of Mary enters the soul, its brightness instantly dispels the darkness and puts the infernal enemies to flight, as if they fled from death." O blessed is he who always invokes the beautiful name of Mary in his conflicts with hell!

In confirmation of this, it was revealed to St. Bridget "that God had rendered Mary so powerful over the devils, that as often as they assault a devout client who calls on this most Blessed Virgin for help, she at a single glance instantly terrifies them, so that they fly far away, preferring to have their pains redoubled rather than see themselves thus subject to the power of Mary."

The divine Bridegroom, when speaking of this His beloved bride, calls her a lily: *As a lily is amongst the thorns, so is my beloved amongst the daughters.* On these words Cornelius a Lapide makes the reflection, "that as the lily is a remedy against serpents and venomous things, so is the invocation of Mary a specific by which we may overcome all temptations, and especially those against purity, as all find who put it into practice."

St. John Damascene used to say, "While I keep my hope in thee unconquerable, O Mother of God, I shall be safe. I will fight and overcome my enemies with no other buckler than thy protection and thy all-powerful aid."

New Books and Old

There may be better Christmas stories in existence than Dickens' *Christmas Carol*, but we have yet to come across them. *The Christmas Carol* is one of those truly great stories which can be read an indefinite number of times without seeming to lose any of its freshness.

We know a man who in the midst of the busy season before Christmas never fails to sit down for a quiet hour or two a day or so before the feast with *The Christmas Carol*, in order, as he says, "to put myself into the Christmas mood." Dickens has been criticized for his over-sentimentality, and the criticism is to a certain extent just, but his essential genius far overshadows this fault and whatever other faults his writing may contain. A more serious complaint against Dickens is that he places all the stress upon charity between men, while neglecting the even more important charity between man and God. But we must take him as he was—a writer of genius who was born and lived with a restricted appreciation of the things which Catholics hold most dear. The charity between men which was his constant theme is most important, too, and no writer has ever painted it in more living colors, just as no writer has equalled him in giving expression to that mysterious warm glow which we all feel at the Christmas season. A great many editions of *The Christmas Carol* have appeared. The Houghton-Mifflin Co. publishes one at 50c; Macmillan at \$1.00; and the E. P. Dutton Co. publishes a rather fancy edition at \$1.50. *The Christmas Carol* makes an excellent book-gift, especially for the young.

The Christmas season with its many connotations of mutual friendship and love is a very appropriate time to discuss the fast-growing Cooperative movements. Two recent books on the subject

A column of comment on new books just appearing and old books that still live. THE LIGURIAN offers its services to obtain books of any kind for any reader, whether they are mentioned here or not.

are before us, and each of them is complementary to the other. *Cooperative Plenty* by J. Elliot Ross (Herder, pp. 204, \$2.00) is theoretical in its approach to the subject. Father Ross' thesis is

this: In view of the fact that legislation of various kinds has failed to solve our economic problems, i.e. to remove the inequalities inherent in the present condition of industry and agriculture, there still remains to be tried one other plan of adjustment: the establishing of a universal cooperative economy by which competitive, private-profit capitalism would be checked, without any increase of government interference. Private profit capitalism would be checked because the consumers of goods would be buying directly from the producers of goods, without the added costs of intermediate handling. The present lack of balance between consumption and production results from the fact that the producers are basing their output not on the amount of goods which the consumers need, but on the amount which will yield them a profit. The only way to offset this state of affairs, says Father Ross, is to change our system from a producer to a consumer economy, and the only way in which this can be effectively done is by the universal spread of Consumer-Cooperatives. Other chapters in the book prove that the cooperative idea is not inimical to capitalism as such, that it is in fact bound up with the idea of private ownership, and that it would eliminate to a large extent state interference in the economic life of the country. Finally, Father Ross shows how much in keeping with our traditional freedom of religion and education are the cooperative ideals. All this is more or less in the realm of theory; for a glimpse of what has been actually accomplished by the Cooperatives in the last few decades, and a discussion of how the various cooperatives are made to work we turn to *Cooperation, a Christian Mode of Industry*, by

THE LIGUORIAN

Edgar Schmiedeler, O.S.B. (Catholic Literary Guild, pp. 218, \$1.50). Father Schmiedeler is one of the leading Catholic authorities in this field, and his book bespeaks an immense amount of study and research. Every statement is backed up with unassailable fact, and any reader not acquainted with this subject is bound to be impressed by the record of accomplishment of the Cooperatives. To quote just one instance: the total number of Credit Unions in the United States at present is more than 9,000, with a membership of 2,500,000, and these Credit Unions have more than \$150,000,000 outstanding in loans at the present time. Father Schmiedeler discusses not only Credit Unions (which are Cooperative banks whose purpose is to provide loans up to \$100 or more to members at a low rate of interest), but also Consumers' Cooperatives, organized to buy groceries and general merchandise directly from the wholesalers for distribution at cost among the members, Insurance Cooperatives, and Farmers' Cooperatives. There are Maternity Guilds to help defray the expenses of having a child, and Burial Guilds to pay the costs of a funeral; in fact there is scarcely any department of life in which the Cooperatives have not taken hold. Europe is (or was) much further advanced in them than the United States, but we are forging ahead rapidly, as the statistics quoted by the author plainly show. The Government has undertaken a policy of encouragement; the Church has always been behind the movement, so we may hope that the future will see the Cooperative idea become more and more widespread. Perhaps in it lies our safety and welfare for the future, which at the present moment appears to most of us so dark.

Cooperation in a slightly different sense is the theme of two pamphlets which we have received. One is *The*

Association of Catholic For the Catholic Trade Unionists Workingmen by Rev. Joseph Oberle, C.Ss.R. The ACTU

(from the initial letters of the above title) is a young and fast growing organization of Catholic working men which has for its purpose the promotion of an upright spirit in the various labor unions. It is not strictly a labor union in itself, for it cuts across union lines, and takes its members from all unions, while endeavoring to ground them in right principles which will apply equally to the activities of each in the particular union to which he belongs. According to Pius XI, " . . . side by side with the trade unions, there must always be associations which aim at giving their members a thorough religious and moral training, that these in turn may impart to the labor unions to which they belong the upright spirit which should direct their entire conduct." Father Oberle's pamphlet shows how the ACTU, which has already been organized in a dozen cities throughout the country, is trying to fulfill to the letter this exhortation of the Pope. The other pamphlet mentioned is *The Catholic Labor School* by Rev. William J. Smith, S.J. Father Smith is director of the Crown Heights School of Catholic Workmen at Brooklyn, which has accomplished yeoman work in providing sound instruction for laboring men. This pamphlet, written out of the author's own experience, describes the need of such instruction, the lines along which it should proceed, and the good which it can accomplish. Both of the above-mentioned pamphlets are published by the Paulist Press at 10c each.

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L u c i d I n t e r v a l s

"Archimedes," read the schoolboy, aloud, "leaped from his bath shouting, 'Eureka! Eureka!'" "One moment," said the teacher. "What is the meaning of 'Eureka?'" "Eureka" means I have found it," said the boy. "Very well. What had Archimedes found?" questioned the teacher. The boy hesitated, then ventured, hopefully. "The soap, sir!"

*

There was a young person named Ned
Who dined before going to bed,
On lobster and ham
And salad and jam,
And when he awoke he was dead.

*

A lawyer became somewhat acrimonious in his cross-examination, but the little woman who was in the witness-box remained calm.

Eventually the lawyer said: "You say you had no education, but you answered my question smartly enough."

The defendant meekly replied: "You don't have to be a scholar to answer silly questions."

*

"My hubby's new invention has broken all records."

"That's good!"

"No, it's bad. It's a new phonograph needle."

*

Little Bobby ran to his mother, sobbing as though his heart would break.

"Why, what's the matter, Bobby?" asked his mother.

"Oh, Daddy was hanging a picture and he dropped it on his toes," answered Bobby between sobs.

"Why, that's nothing to cry about, you should laugh at that," said his mother.

"I did," Bobby replied.

*

"Biddy," says Pat, timidly, "did ye iver think o' marryin'?"

"Shure, now," says Biddy, looking demurely at her shoe, "shure, now, the subject has niver entered me mind at all, at all."

"It's sorry Oi am," says Pat, and he turned away.

"Wan minute, Pat," said Biddy, softly. "Ye've set me thinkin'."

The feature of the day's program was a paper by Jim Corcoran, on "Banking, Its Origin and Development Through from the Time of the Roman Empire to the Present Day." Two minutes were given Jim to handle this task and he handled it splendidly.

*

First Englishman: "Charley, did you hear that joke about the Egyptian guide who showed some tourists two skulls of Cleopatra—one as a girl and one as a woman?"

Second Ditto "No, let's hear it."

*

A young lady came into a drug store and asked if it were possible to disguise castor oil. "It's horrid stuff to take, you know. Ugh!" And she shuddered.

"Why, certainly," said the druggist. Another young lady sat down and ordered a chocolate ice-cream soda. The druggist asked the first patron if she would not have one too. With a smile she accepted the invitation, and drank it down with much gusto.

"Now tell me, Doctor, how would you disguise castor oil?"

The druggist beamed all over. "Aha, my dear young lady, I just gave you some—in that soda—"

"But, good heavens, Doctor! Why, I wanted it for my sister!"

*

There was a young man named Achilles,
Whose wrongs always gave him the willies.

So he sulked in his tent

Like a half-witted gent—

Say, wasn't them heroes the sillies!

*

A gentleman riding with an old Irishman came in sight of an old gallows and to display his wit said: "Pat, do you see that?"

"To be sure I do," replied Pat.

"And where would you be today if the gallows had its due?"

"I'd be riding alone," replied Pat.

*

I wish I were a kangaroo,
Despite his funny stances;
I'd have a place to put the junk
My girl brings to the dances.

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Abbreviations and Publishers' Names:

B-Mrrl.....Robbs-Merrill
Br.....Bruce
Bzgr.....Benziger Bros.
C.A.C.W.....Catholic Action Committee,
Wichita
C.B.P.....Central Press Bureau

C.C.V.....Catholic Central Verein
C.G.....Catechetical Guild
C.G. St.P.....Catechetical Guild, St. Paul
C.L.G.....Catholic Literary Guild
C.L.S.....Catholic Literary Service
C.P.....Carmelite Press
Dtn.....E. P. Dutton
Harc-Br.....Harcourt-Brace
Hdr.....Herder
H-Mfln.....Houghton-Mifflin
Hprs.....Harpers
Ken.....Kenedy
L-Br.....Little Brown
Lbty.....Lamberty
L.G.....Literary Guild
L-Gr.....Longmans Green
L.M.P.....Leaflet Missal Press
L.P.....Liturgy Press, Collegeville
Lpct.....Lippincott
McBr.....McBride
Mcml.....Macmillan
Marygr.....Marygrove, Detroit
N.C.R.L.C.....National Catholic Rural Life
Conference

Pal.....Paluch
P.P.....Paulist Press
Pust.....Pustet
Q.W.P.....Queen's Work Press
Salv.....Salvatorian Fathers
Sds.....Sands
S.V.P.....Sunday Visitor Press
S & W.....Sheel & Ward
St. John's.....St. John's Abbey, Collegeville
Tcny.....Techny Press
Vkg.....Viking

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